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Moral agency

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This small volume, the subject of
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attached friend, G. Kemp.

London. Sept.r 1, 1846

MORAL AGENCY;

AND

MAN AS A MORAL AGENT.

BY

WILLIAM M'COMBIE,

AUTHOR OF "HOURS OF THOUGHT."

PUBLISHED BY R. B. SEELEY AND W. BURNSIDE:
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"I SEARCH FOR TRUTH, BY WHICH NO PERSON HAS EVER BEEN INJURED."
MARCUS ANTONINUS.

THE HOLY BOOK, LIKE THE EIGHT SPHERES, DOES SHINE
WITH THOUSAND LIGHTS OF TRUTH DIVINE.
SO NUMBERLESS THE STARS, THAT TO THE EYE
IT MAKES BUT ALL ONE GALAXY.
YET REASON MUST ASSIST TOO; FOR IN SEAS
SO VAST AND DANGEROUS AS THESE,
OUR COURSE BY STARS ABOVE WE CANNOT KNOW,
WITHOUT THE COMPASS TOO BELOW."
COWLEY.

PRINTED BY L AND G. SEELEY, THAMES DITTON.

PREFACE.

THE following treatise proceeds on the principle that there are ascertainable laws and conditions of moral being as well as of physical and organic existence. It is this which renders moral agency capable of being treated as a matter of science,—brings it within the range of rational investigation, and warrants our pursuing our inquiries respecting it as we do in regard to the objects of physical science, unchecked by any apprehension lest the results should be found to contravene the statements of holy writ,—confident rather that the principles and views we obtain by the proper exercise of our rational powers must ever ultimately be found to harmonize with these. It is well, however, that reason should know its limits, and we are not to seek for the origin of moral obligation in any of what are merely results of its exercise. The constitution of moral agents, and the grounds and conditions of moral action are matters open to the investigation of reason; but the sense of obligation can result only from Divine authority apprehended or believed to be,

somehow, manifested or revealed. The following treatise is thus less concerned with the foundation of moral obligation than with the constitution and powers of moral beings; many of its principal topics therefore relate less to things directly taught in Scripture than to what is involved or implied in what it teaches, and what the consistency of its different parts with each other, and with the nature and conditions of moral agency and moral government requires. Other parts of it, however, bear on what the Scriptures directly teach; and in the inquiries and discussions regarding both is involved the fullest exercise of the right of private judgment, which great principle of Protestantism, it should be borne in mind, involves in it the recognition of the use and exercise of individual reason in religious matters, the right of each individual to judge for himself clearly presupposing the possession of a power or faculty which, if rightly exercised, is competent to this; and this principle is nullified not less when the competence of individual reason is denied, than when its exercise is disallowed. With this great principle the whole strain and bearing of Scripture harmonizes, which, so far from aiming at 'putting out the light of reason,' uniformly recognizes its exercise, and addresses itself to it on all fitting occasions.

Such a well-defined and healthy protestantism, the writer conceives the present times emphatically call for. The tendencies of theological and ecclesiastical opinion are making it every day more manifest that all religionists are fast ranging into two classes,—those who take their faith from the Bible, and those who take it from the Church. Having thus stated with all distinctness with which of these he himself holds, the writer may be permitted respectfully to ask his reader,—'With which do you range yourself?' If with the latter, and you have decidedly taken part, the writer cannot hold out to you any hope of satisfaction in the perusal of the following pages; for whatever church it be whose teaching you confide in, you will not find its creed there done homage to on account of its being such; and as it must be a point settled with you beyond the reach of rational questioning, that whatever conclusions any one may come to that are not in harmony with the accredited symbol of your faith, must of necessity be wrong: no better results than annoyance and mental disquietude can well be anticipated from a review of inquiries and reasonings, many of which will be found to belong to what is with you a proscribed order, and which by consequence you have already prejudged and condemned.

But if you are one of those who come directly to the Bible for your faith, you of course practically know that its meaning is to be ascertained through the exercise of the same faculties, which are applied to the investigation of the works of nature; and while claiming the liberty of judging for yourself, and conceding to others an equal freedom, you will be ready to accept with gratitude every discreet and well-intentioned endeavour to aid you in ascertaining the true principles taught in the word of God, or involved in what it teaches. From such as you who, maintaining and exercising intellectual freedom, have resolved to search after truth for themselves, and who would not 'sell' it for the most splendid possessions or honours which the universe has to bestow, the writer anticipates a cordial sympathy in his labours, and apprehends no uncharitable censure, even where they may deem him to have erred. To such, then he would humbly dedicate the following inquiries, confident that whether they acquiesce in few or many of the results, they will at least honour the motive which prompted him to institute them.

CAIRNBALLOCH,
Jan. 12, 1842.

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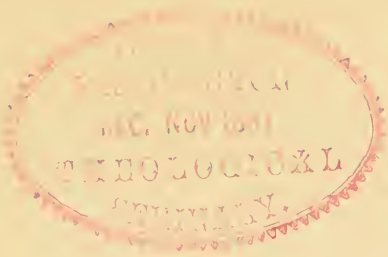

INTRODUCTION.

THERE are two great inquiries embraced in the following Treatise, viz. 1st. What is moral agency considered in itself; and, 2ndly. What are the powers and conditions of man in relation to it. Under the first, the author has endeavoured to ascertain what the nature of moral agency is, and what are the indispensable conditions of its being exercised; in doing so he has been led to inquire what the kind of knowledge is which forms properly the basis of moral agency, and how it is obtained, and has endeavoured to meet the difficulties which arise from the divine foreknowledge, and to subvert the position that mind in its actings is subject to the law of causation, or that in choosing and willing, it is not free. In the second part of the treatise, the writer has entered on the inquiry, what the powers, and capabilities, and resources of man are, considered as a moral agent. In what respects and to what extent he has, considered in this light, been affected by the sin of Adam or the fall, and in what respects and to what extent by the work of Christ. In regard to these, the writer has endeavoured to show that whatever evils mankind universally may have become exposed to, or may suffer, on account of

Adam's sin, independently of any agency on their part, are obviated, or will be ultimately repaired—alike independently of their agency—by Christ; that no man is now under any sentence of condemnation to eternal perdition on account of Adam's sin alone, or anterior to personal transgression: that the loss sustained by man by the fall is not strictly a loss of the power to do good, but of the disposition; consequently, that in man's present condition there is no insuperable barrier to his choosing and pursuing what is right, or to his reaping the proper consequences of so doing, and that it is from these things being so, that his pursuing what is wrong derives its special ill-desert and heinousness.

The reader will require to have distinctly in view, that in the following treatise the work of Christ is regarded as having a twofold bearing on the condition and destiny of man. The first in relation to the evils, just referred to, brought on all by the sin of Adam, anterior to, and apart from, any choice of theirs; and which as they come on all independently of any agency on their part, are obviated or will be ultimately repaired by Christ in a manner equally independent of personal agency; 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Compare, Rom. v. 15, 18: And the second in relation to the evils which men suffer or become exposed to through their own personal transgression, and which, as they never come on any but through their own choice, will never be removed from, or repaired to any, but those who embrace and avail themselves of the remedy. In its former bearing, the atonement is not only sufficient, but efficient in regard to the whole race; in its latter bearing, though equally sufficient for the salvation of all, it can be available to none but those who personally embrace its provisions. It is in the former of these bearings that the work of

Christ comes within the scope of our inquiry; the latter, if adverted to at all, is only incidentally so, in the course of the following pages. If the reader will keep this distinctly in view, it may prevent him from charging the author with holding a defective theology, because he has not referred to doctrines or principles which it fell not within the plan of his work to include.

A probable exception to much in the following pages will be, that many of the discussions are far too metaphysical. There is extensively diffused among us an unfortunate distaste for metaphysical inquiries, and a very hurtful prejudice against them. Now it certainly can be no proof that such inquiries must necessarily be unprofitable or injurious, that they have often been conducted so as to be productive only of mysticism or error. The true way to obviate such evils is not to neglect and despise the philosophy of mind, but to endeavour to cultivate it in a proper manner and a proper spirit; for we may be assured that if the thinking or questioning portions of the community are not pervaded by the elements of a sound philosophy of mind and moral action, thousands will embrace false and distorted views, which will exercise a fatal influence, both on their mental condition and their conduct. We often hear invectives against metaphysics, on the ground that they are of no practical value or importance, but we shall come to a very different conclusion if we take an impartial survey of the history of metaphysical systems and their practical influence, though this survey should not extend beyond a very recent period. From what did the prevalent scepticism of the eighteenth century, on the one hand, and the inertness of the true church on the other, du-

ring the same period, spring, but from a false or perverted metaphysics; and what other foundation has the pernicious system of socialism in our own times? Shall it be assumed that metaphysics are of little or no practical moment, when we take into view the distress, often rising to agony, which the dark and difficult questions involved in them, occasion to almost every questioning and contemplative mind; and think how many of the more sensitive and desponding order of human spirits have, by misapprehensions regarding the first principles of the philosophy of accountable rational mind, been driven on the quicksands of pyrrhonism; and how many of the harder and more sanguine, on the sterile rocks of dogmatism.

Indeed the greatest misconceptions and errors in theology and morals, spring from an ill-constructed or false philosophy of mind and responsible action. Romanism, Anglican 'church principles,' Hyper-Calvinism, and Socialism, have a fraternity in this; that they arise out of, and subsist by, misconceptions or unsound positions regarding the capacity and powers of man, the economy under which moral agency finds scope and is developed, and the principles which in the divine government regulate the treatment of moral agents. Now, though the philosophy of mind and moral agency are not capable of the same sort of certainty as the exact sciences, the main principles involved in the existence and order of voluntary and responsible relations, must surely be ascertainable; else we should be left in an uncertainty altogether incompatible with the very idea of responsibility. While then the nature of the subject forbids, on the one hand, our receiving any system—mystic, or dogmatic—on the ground of a church authority of ostensibly, or

tacitly, assumed infallibility, it should prevent us from concluding, as many seem to do, on the other,—that any investigation of such recondite matters must involve us in the mazes of hopeless uncertainty or interminable error. Many evince a reluctance to pursue, or even allow, inquiry on certain topics, because they regard them as mysterious. Such feelings may, and often no doubt do, arise from true humility and reverence for what is inscrutable in the divine counsel; but they may also spring from indolence, combined with a sort of spiritual pride, or from apprehensiveness for the safety of favourite dogmas, which, it may be feared, would not stand the ordeal of rational investigation. There is a distinction between what is mysterious and what is secret, to which it is of no small importance that we attend. A mystery is something open to our view, or revealed to us, but of which we are unable to comprehend the grounds or reasons; we see or believe that it is, but are unable to pereeive how it exists in the manner that it does, rather than in any other: we are in this predicament, with respect to innumerable things in nature; but in regard to the "secret things" in the divine economy, our ignorance does not necessarily arise from their being of an incomprehensible character,—many of them we might be quite able to comprehend,—but from God's having seen fit quite to conceal them from our view. Things on which God has distinctly put the seal of secrecy, it were presumption to pry into; but in regard to facts or principles revealed, but the ground or nature of which may appear mysterious, the propriety of investigating such, will depend on the competence of our faculties to grapple with and solve the questions which may be involved in their investigation. Many

things conventionally deemed inscrutable might be made to yield, or might have their difficulties much alleviated, by being subjected to patient and severe investigation by minds of superior powers of comprehension and analysis. The source of mystery is not any indistinctness in the nature of some truths considered in themselves, but is to be assigned to the inadequacy of the cognizant or conceptive powers in the minds to which such truths appear mysterious. All truth is certain, and all relations must appear distinct and clear, both in their principle and actual subsistence, to a being of sufficient reach of view and grasp of faculties. It might prove a serious impediment to the progress of knowledge, were we to abstain from the investigation of every thing deemed mysterious, simply on account of its being so regarded. Had such a principle been deferred to in investigations respecting physical nature, the sciences conversant with physical relations could never have advanced so far towards perfection. But on the other hand it must be borne in mind, that man has but a very circumscribed range of view, and that the faculties of his mind are but of limited power; there is much, therefore, that must remain inscrutable to him. The range of investigation has on all sides a limit beyond which human thought is baffled and human inquiry vain; and those who have imagined they could comprehend all mysteries, or that there was nothing really bearing such a character; that they could pass on unobstructed and at will even into the depths of the divine nature and counsel, have in the presumptuous attempt, run themselves against that adamantine wall which bounds the range of knowledge accessible to man; and were possessed only by the illusions of their reeling senses—

under the stunned recoil, when they fancied they had penetrated to the glories, and were scanning the primal forms, in the inner sanctuary of the universe.

But in addition to his recognising the utility and importance of metaphysical inquiries, the reader must keep in view that the author of the following treatise has proceeded on the principle, that each one is not only entitled, but solemnly bound, to judge for himself on sufficient examination, respecting the meaning of Scripture, free from all restriction or dictation on the part of any body which may call itself "the church." If on sufficient evidence we have received the Scriptures as a divine revelation, by so receiving them we become bound to believe all the truths, and obey all the laws contained in them. But the Scriptures come to us under the conditions which are common to all written language; they are addressed to us as rational creatures capable of understanding their meaning,—of forming a judgment respecting it, and of using methods for ascertaining it when it is not obvious at first view; and no body of men is entitled to step between us and the Bible, with an interpretation of its contents, and say, 'In this sense, and this alone, you must receive them, else you are a heretic, and must be treated as an outcast from the church.' Those who would attempt to assume such 'dominion over our faith,' we can confront with the charter of our spiritual freedom, derived from no lower authority than that of God himself, who has given it with the solemn injunction that we maintain it inviolate. "Search the Scriptures." "Prove all things;" "hold fast that which is good." "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." And if every one must at last answer for himself, surely it is right that every one should be free

to judge and choose for himself, respecting that on which his eternal destiny is declared by God to depend. God, in offering the high boon of salvation to a sinful world, has made the truth essential to it, clear, simple, and of easy comprehension by all: a teachable disposition is the only thing necessary to its reception. But the case is very different with regard to the true value and bearings of Christianity, considered as an important part of the great scheme of the Divine administration; these seem only in the course of being slowly evolved by extended observation, patient study, and laborious research, with a progress analogous to the practical evolution of that great economy through the course of time. Moreover, as our views become more just, distinct, and enlarged, respecting the economy of nature, and the constitution, powers, and susceptibilities of man, the more correct and well-defined will our notions become, both of the relations of Christianity to him, and of its harmony with that economy of nature under which he exists. For such reasons as these we rest not uninquiringly in the views of those who have preceded us, however distinguished they may have been for character or attainments. We are perfectly willing to allow that it was quite possible and even likely for the Christians of the third and fourth centuries, to attain to more comprehensive views of scriptural truth, and of the various bearings of the redeeming economy, than those of the first (whether such was in fact the case it is not necessary for us at present to inquire); but this involves the very reason why we judge it wrong to rest either indolently or superstitiously in what they attained to, as we conceive that they had no means of surpassing their predecessors, except as we have corresponding or greater facilities for

surpassing them. The true and consistent Protestant, who makes the Christian scheme and its various relations, special objects of inquiring thought, studies the fathers and doctors of the Church, that he may obtain all the assistance they can furnish in forming just and enlarged conceptions of truth; that he may, if possible, turn their labours to some valuable account for the advancenent of the highest orders of knowledge, feeling that if he aimed not at this he would be utterly unworthy to have succeeded to such an intellectual inheritance. But the adherent of "church principles" studies them only that he may resign himself to their authority, and adopt their faith in blind unquestioning acquiescence; with a mystic sentiment of awe he loves, or rather adores, the Church, because her stained windows and sombrous aisles, screen him from the painful excess of light which is breaking forth in the open world around.

Many readers desiderate definitions of the principal terms and phrases in treatises of this kind; and propounders and expositors of metaphysical systems, have been charged with occasioning much needless controversy, and producing a great appearance of difference, where little or none really existed, by not accurately defining the principal terms and phrases by which they expressed their doctrines, or by not sufficiently keeping in view the sense in which such terms and phrases may have been used by those whose principles they have set themselves to controvert. We mean not to deny that for such a complaint there has been some ground, but all that could be done in the way of definition would go but a short way in narrowing the debateable land of mental science and metaphysical

theology : though stript as far as possible of all logomachy, the great points of controversy would still remain. When men, having a competent acquaintance with the language in which they write, use contradictory words and phrases in expressing their notions of the same subject, it is certainly more likely that there is some opposition or real discrepancy in the notions themselves, than that they have merely misunderstood each other's meaning. When words and phrases are in danger of producing ambiguity from their bearing various senses, it is well to indicate in which of these they are used. But the using of words in senses new or alien from what they have been formed for, and trusting to mere definition for fixing them down to such a meaning, is always a hazardous and seldom a successful experiment. Forms of expression are by no means such pliable things as many seem to imagine; they cannot, at the will or mere caprice of every one who handles them, be bent and twisted about from the meaning which they are adapted, and, if I may so express myself, have been moulded to convey; they uniformly resent such violence, and speedily, in the mind, at least of the reader, if not in the intention of the writer, come round to the proper sense they are fitted to bear; or if not allowed to do that, refuse to convey any intelligible meaning at all, and there is far more danger of occasioning confusion and misconception by arbitrary definitions of terms and phrases, than by allowing them to convey their natural and appropriate meaning, that being harmonized with, and distinctly brought out by a simple and luminous context.

As an expression of two distinct and widely different exercises of mind, language divides itself into two

great compartments; the one adapted to convey immediate, lively, or powerful impression, the other calm philosophical investigation. The immediate and uninvestigated aspects of things often impress us very deeply, and we choose words and forms of expression which we deem best adapted to embody what we perceive and feel. Language in this use of it is a record not so much of things as they are in themselves, as of the impressions we receive from them, our purpose in using it is to communicate our impressions as distinctly and vividly as possible to the minds of others. Thus in poetical descriptions, that of which we delightedly or exultingly recognise the truthfulness and beauty, is quite a different thing from any successful disclosure of the nature of the things described considered by themselves, or under their physical relations, it is the revealing of that relation (strange and undefineable!) which they bear to our experience and the workings of our minds. The felicity of such description or portraiture is recognised not according as it most distinctly brings to view the abstract nature or relations of things, but according as it most vividly brings home to our consciousness those—if I may be allowed so to call them—spirit-relations. The processes of mind which are involved in inquiries into the nature of things, and into those relations which lie without the sphere of consciousness and living experience, are of a different order, and a different vehicle is required for communicating to others both them and their results. In the former case, a writer or speaker aims only at giving a vivid description of things as they appear to him, or as they affect him; in the latter case it is his aim to show what the things really are, and how it is that they come to be what

they are. The introduction into strictly philosophical inquiry or speculation of the language and modes of speaking, which we appropriate to poetical, or popular and non-philosophical composition, has proved a source of much confusion and error, while attempts to guard against these by means of definitions generally avail little; and in fact in the nature of things cannot avail much, seeing the very cast and moulding of such language and modes of expression are incompatible with the use to which they are applied: their appropriateness and force in their own proper sphere, arising from their being figurative, or in some degree intensified and exaggerated; whereas in a strictly philosophical treatise we cannot hope to approach precision, unless we strip our language as far as possible of all that is figurative, and avoid all conscious exaggeration.

To give some illustration of these remarks. When we say of a miser, he cannot part with his money, we do so because we always perceive in him the greatest reluctance to part with any which he can possibly retain. According to the principle above stated we use this mode of speaking in order to give a vivid impression of the strength of his passion for gold, and when confined to popular discourse, and introduced so as not to imply inevitableness, such a mode of speaking may be used not only without impropriety, but with special beauty and force. In like manner, when in common speaking, we say of a confirmed drunkard, that he cannot keep from drink; or when it is said in Scripture, "That he that is in the flesh cannot please God," and "He that is born of God cannot sin," it is never meant that in either of these cases there is any real impossibility, all that is intended is emphatically

to express a strong inclination or disinclination. But the case is completely changed when such and similar phrases are used in such a way as to imply necessity or impossibility; or when, taken in all the fulness and strictest literality of their meaning, they are made the basis of metaphysical principles or theological doctrines; as, when it is maintained, for instance, that because the states and operations of mind are uniformly connected with the influences which operate on it, therefore there is in these the force of inevitable causation: or, because it is declared in Scripture, "That he that is in the flesh cannot please God," it is held that there is a real impossibility in his doing so. There are many popular modes of speaking in regard to material things, which are used as freely as they were before the modern discoveries of physical science showed that they were applicable only to the appearance of things, and not to their real state or order; yet they never confuse or mislead the minds of philosophical inquirers. We speak of the sun rising and the sun going down; but no one acquainted with the relations of the bodies composing the solar system, is ever in danger of being led, by the use of such expressions, into the notion that the sun daily performs the circuit of the heavens. We speak of the old moon and the new moon, but we never think from using these phrases, that every month the moon's substance is gradually wasted and renewed.

In the course of the following pages the writer has had occasion, in expressing his own views, to controvert principles promulged by various distinguished men, among whom he may name Edwards, Cousin, and Abercombie. In doing so he has expressed himself

freely, and in terms corresponding with his convictions, where these were strong and decided. But he is not one of those who would altogether condemn a man, however eminent he may be, because they conceive he has committed some mistakes, or fallen into some errors; or who will not allow that he may, notwithstanding, have done essential service to the cause of truth. Indeed the present writer would be reluctant to think that humble independent enquiry should ever ultimately fail of such a result, and his apprehensions regarding the following attempt are not a little alleviated by the hope that though it should be found of but little service in clearing away obstacles and throwing light on obscurities, it may at least sometimes indicate the way by which truth is to be found, and that the very mistakes and errors into which he may have fallen may stimulate others to a more successful search.

Freedom of thought is the highest intellectual distinction of our being (and that not the less that it has been so often disallowed and foregone), as freedom of choice is the indispensable condition of our moral agency. Our true elevation as rational and accountable intelligences, can result only from the proper exercise of both. Nothing short of a free and unbounded range of inquiry, restrained and controlled by no authority, save that of God, can furnish a sphere wide enough for the full developement of our intellectual being; while the perfection of our moral character cannot be attained in anything less than a readiness to do or suffer whatever God may call us to, regardless of personal sacrifice.

PART I.

OF MORAL AGENCY IN GENERAL.

SECTION I.

THE NATURE AND DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OF MORAL AGENCY.

A MORAL agent is an intelligent being who has the power of choosing, and scope to act according to his choice; one to whom the Supreme Governor has given a cognizable law, with its proper sanction, by which to regulate his volitions and actions, and who is placed in circumstances which present no physical obstruction, either to obedience or disobedience. Moral action, therefore, is action which springs from choice, and is not necessitated either by mental propension or external circumstances: intelligent, free, and accountable, it is distinguished on the one hand from instinctive action, which is the result of an undeviating and unfailing but blind propension, and on the other from Divine action, which though certain as instinct, is yet in the fullest sense intelligent and free. Instinctive action is certain, because it results from unfailing and determinate impulse proper to the action it prompts to, and free from the risk of incertitude from doubt,

as it is beneath the range of intelligence. Divine action is certain too, as it is disturbed by no doubt and no vacillation or weakening of impulse; but it is so because it springs from an intelligence in which all doubt is swallowed up, is sustained by a power above resistance, and is exerted with a freedom beyond control. But moral action has neither the certitude of action from instinct, nor of Divine action; for both sovereign propension, and omniscience, or an indubitable universal knowledge, would be alike incompatible with moral agency. A being capable of moral agency is one who possesses the means of judging rightly, and power to act accordingly; but whether he will do so or not, depends on the voluntary exercise of his faculties: so that by neglecting rightly to exercise these he may judge and act wrong. Had all truth been presented to the cognizance of our senses, or made intuitively certain, or been brought before us in the form of demonstration, there could have been no such thing as faith, and consequently no moral agency; such agency involving reliance on testimony, and resulting from the influence of motives drawn from objects neither perceptible by the senses, nor capable of demonstrative proof.* Moral agency always involves the operation of different or opposing motives on the mind; for such agency ceases where there is only one motive presented, or where motives operate irresistibly. But the capability of being influenced by motives involves the susceptibility of emotion: a moral agent, therefore, in addition to the capacity of distinguishing right from wrong, and freedom to act according to his choice, must be susceptible of emotion to impel him to choose.

* The grounds of these positions the reader will find stated in detail under Section 3 of Part I.

Whether there exist in any sphere of creation bare intelligences, capable of receiving truth only with the insensitive hardness of mathematical demonstration, we know not, but the existence of such is *prima faciæ* improbable; for supposing such to exist, they could not be moral agents, for they would want all the susceptibilities which render intelligent natures capable of advancement, or even of action. Though endued with the power of comprehending and mastering all truth, yet destitute of all the powers of feeling, they would have no stimulus to its discovery, and its acquisition would give them no pleasure. The powers of taste spring from a sense of beauty and congruity, whose impressions excite keen and delicate feeling, and it is indispensible to the sense of moral obligation, not only that moral sanctions be comprehended, but that they be felt; but such intelligences being insusceptible of all feeling, could not be amenable to law, for to beings incapable alike of enjoyment and of suffering, its fulfilment could bring no good, and its infraction no evil; and being unamenable to law, and insusceptible of the refinements of taste, they would be incapable of acquiring any character.

But a moral agent must not only be susceptible of emotion, he must be susceptible of the excitement of appetites, or desires for objects which are denied him, for if he were susceptible of emotive excitement only towards right objects, his agency would be more akin to the instinctive than the moral. But on the other hand, it is not less essential to moral action that the mind should have the power of controlling its emotions; this power is what is usually termed the Will, which determines according to the dictates of the understanding, and in moral action is impelled by the

sense of moral obligation or conscience, which carries with it the most powerful of all impressions. The power and legitimate influence of conscience, however, are greatly dependant on the right exercise of the reflecting and judging faculties, and the proper control of the various propensions. If truth is not unremittingly sought, if the propensions are not regulated and restrained, in the one case conscience cannot be enlightened, in the other it will ultimately have to succumb to the tyranny of passion.

A difficulty will, no doubt, have presented itself to the thinking reader, in regard to some of the principles just laid down—that they are incompatible with the existence of moral character in God. In reference to this, it must be observed that the moral character of God is not subject to the conditions of dependant moral agency. God is not accountable, he is not placed under any law given and sanctioned by a superior nature, for he is himself supreme; and he cannot be placed in a state of trial, regulated by faith in the testimony of a superior, and exercised regarding objects future, and but relatively certain,* for he has no superior, and there is nothing future or uncertain in his view. These conditions of dependent moral agency are intended and adapted for the developement and maturing of moral character; but the moral character of God is original, and not capable of any other developement than its disclosure to his creatures, according to their conduct and circumstances. The trial of his character can only bring out what may formerly

* By relatively certain is meant, not certain by itself, or absolutely, but only in connection with something else; as salvation is certain, not to all, but only to those who believe, and endure to the end.

have been hidden from them, there is nothing to form. But in created moral agents, the moral character is to develope and mature; and it could not be otherwise, unless they were created in a perfection, beyond which there was no room for advancement, which is utterly incompatible with the idea of dependant moral agency. God then is not a moral agent in any such sense as his dependent intelligences are, as he is not subject to the conditions of such agency as theirs. While in all cases their agency has a bearing upwards to him, the bearing of his is ever downwards to them; while the law which regulates moral action in creatures emanates from him, that which regulates the action of the Divine Mind,—which corresponds to moral in creatures,—springs up spontaneously there.

SECTION II.

DIFFICULTIES.

The first difficulty, in regard to moral agency, arises from the alleged fact, that God's certain fore-knowledge of events renders them necessary, and as this fore-knowledge extends to all events, it include the actions and volitions of moral agents, rendering these necessary as well as other events. 'It is evident,' says President Edwards, 'that if there be a full, certain, and infallible fore-knowledge of the future existence of the volitions of moral agents, then there is a certain infallible and indissoluble connexion between those events and that fore-knowledge; and that therefore those events are necessary events, being infallibly and indissolubly connected with that, whose existence already is, and so is now necessary, and cannot but have been.'* Again, 'it is perfectly demonstrable, that if there be an infallible knowledge of future volitions, the event is *necessary*, or, in other words, that it is impossible but the event should come to pass.'†

Now if there are to be events at all, if moral agents

* Works of Jonathan Edwards, 2 vols. London: 1834. Vol. i. p. 36.

† Ibid.

are to think and act, in other words, if there are to *be* moral agents, God must know their volitions and actions, what they are to be, else he would not be Omniscient; if he did not know all these during all duration his knowledge would be imperfect, and he would be unfit to be the moral Governor of the universe, for if any of the volitions or actions of rational agents—to occur in however remote an era—were hidden from him, some of these might take him by surprise, and he might be disconcerted, and his plans might be disarranged by them. A full and certain knowledge or foreknowledge (the former is the proper term in relation to God, the latter an accommodation to our imperfect conceptions), a full and certain fore-knowledge of all events is necessary alike to the perfection of the Divine nature, and to the discharge of the functions of a moral Governor. But this full and certain knowledge interferes not at all with the freedom of moral agency, and it neither causes nor proves any necessity in the volitions and actions of moral agents. God's knowing certainly that they will resolve on this, does not preclude the possibility of their resolving on that instead; his knowing certainly that they will do this, does not prevent them from doing that, any more than your seeing a man walking to the alehouse on Sunday prevents him from going to church. As little can anything be distant by futurity in time from Jehovah, as anything can be distant from him by remoteness in space. It is not less certain, nor more difficult to conceive of, that God should comprehend, at once all events throughout all eras, than that he should be present at once with every existence throughout all regions of the universe. Progression is the law of created natures, comprehensive continuousness,

of the Divine. God, therefore, does not need in any case, in order to obtain certainty of knowledge, to trace out link by link, as we do, a chain of consecutive causation, and, because one of his dependant minds must form this volition, conclude that that other must necessarily follow, and that other still again from it: he *sees* the whole at once. Knowing all things *immediately,* not *mediately,* in order to be certain of any (future) event, he does not need to know that it will be an infallible result of some other event which he has determined, or of some action which he is to perform; to suppose any such process necessary to the certitude of his knowledge, were indeed to limit and dim the glory of his Omniscience—to reduce his knowledge, if not to the *measure,* at least to the *manner* of our own.

President Edwards brings forward the following argument as proof, in his view, that 'no future event can be certainly fore-known, whose existence is contingent, and without all necessity. It is impossible for a thing to be certainly known to any intellect, without *evidence.* To suppose otherwise, implies a contradiction; because, for a thing to be certainly known to any understanding, is for it to be *evident* to that understanding: and for a thing to be *evident* to any understanding, is the same thing as for that understanding to *see evidence* of it; but no understanding, created or uncreated, can *see evidence* where there is none; for that is the same thing, as to see that to be which is not. And therefore, if there be any truth which is absolutely without evidence, that truth is absolutely unknowable, insomuch that it implies a contradiction to suppose that it is known.

'But if there be any future event, whose existence

is contingent, without all necessity, the future existence of the event is absolutely *without evidence*. If there be any evidence of it, it must be one of these two sorts, either *self-evidence* or *proof;* an evident thing must be evident, either *in itself*, or evident *in something else*; that is, evident by *connexion* with something else. But a future thing, whose existence is without all necessity, can have neither of those sorts of evidence. It cannot be *self-evident*, for if it be, it may now be known by what is now to be seen in the thing itself, its present existence, or the necessity of its nature; but both these are contrary to the supposition. It is supposed both that the thing has no present existence to be seen, and also that it is not of such a nature as to be necessarily existent for the future; so that its future existence is not self-evident. And, *secondly*, neither is there any *proof*, or evidence *in anything else*, or evidence of connexion with something else that is evident, for this is also contrary to the supposition. It is supposed that there is now nothing existing with which the future existence of the *contingent* event is connected; for such a connexion destroys its contingence, and supposes necessity. Thus it is demonstrated, that there is in the nature of things absolutely no evidence at all of the future existence of that event, which is contingent, without all necessity (if any such event there be), neither self-evidence nor proof. And therefore the thing in reality, is not evident, and so cannot be seen to be evident, or which is the same thing, cannot be known.'*

Viewed under the light of the preceding observations, this demonstration will be found anything but valid. This 'future thing, whose existence is without

* Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. i. p. 36.

all necessity,' not only may, but certainly will, be seen by a being who sees all duration—and all existences and events throughout it—at once.

All events are certain to a being all-knowing; to affirm this, is saying no more than that one event cannot be the same and another at the same time: for supposing all events now occurring in the world quite different from what they are, that would not in the least have diminished the certainty of such a being's knowledge of them; for such a being must ever have known what they were to be, let that be supposed what it will. The identity of events, then, and not their necessity, is all that is requisite in order to their certainty in the view of an omniscient being. No two events or actions can be the same in time, place, circumstances, and agency. Every act must differ from every other act, either in the time of its performance, the circumstances in which it is performed, or the agent that performs it: there is therefore no act but what differs, in some respect, from every other act, or in other words, has something which individualizes it, and this individuality is all that is necessary to make it certain in the view of an omniscient being. Nothing indeed could render any act, or event, uncertain to such a being, except the impossible supposition, that it might be the same, and yet a different one, at the same time. Events, then, are certain in the view of God, inasmuch as each has an individuality which prevents it from being confounded with any other, and inasmuch as it is impossible for any event to be the same and another at the same time: but an event is necessary, not because it cannot be at once the same and another, but because any other, in the given circumstances, is impossible. This is in effect repeatedly

affirmed by Edwards, as—'To suppose the future volitions of moral agents, not to be necessary events; or, which is the same thing, events which it is not impossible, but that they may not come to pass; and yet to suppose that God certainly fore-knows them, and knows all things, is to suppose God's knowledge to be inconsistent with itself.' And again—'There is as much impossibility but that the things which are infallibly fore-known, should be; or which is the same thing, as great a necessity of their future existence, as if the event were already written down, and was known and read by all mankind, through all preceding ages, and there was the most indissoluble and perfect connexion possible between the writing and the thing written.' In the paragraph immediately following this last quotation, he affirms that this necessity is not at all inconsistent with any liberty which man or any other creature enjoys. But what sort of liberty it can be which is consistent with a necessity, so stern as to render it absolutely impossible for any single volition or action to have been different from what it is—how it can be absolutely impossible for me not to write this page, and yet be free to write it or not, as I choose—if this is not a contradiction in terms, I know of nothing which can be. Man's freeness to choose, is one of the original, spontaneous, and indestructible convictions of the human mind, and unless our mental constitution be a lie—unless we adopt the revolting principle of Lord Kaimes, that the human mind is really bound by a fatal necessity, and yet so constituted as to fancy itself free, and feel as if it were so—we are shut up to one of these conclusions,—either, two propositions that contradict each other may be both true, or the doctrine of necessity must be false.

This we might deem sufficient to set the doctrine in question at rest, yet such is the tenacity of life in this metaphysical monster, that though thrice slain, it will start up before us anew; and after all, we may expect to hear the question, how can a thing be seen which has no existence, and in regard to which there is no necessity that it should exist? If it is seen or fore-seen, must it not then of necessity exist? Take anything now existing; is the present seeing of the existence of such a thing any proof that it was necessary that it should exist; because it is seen to exist now, does that prove that it was from eternity impossible but that it should exist? If its being seen now existing is not a proof of this necessity, neither is the prescience of its existence a proof of the necessity of it, for in the pre-view of it no more is seen, than is seen when it actually exists, only relatively, and in the apprehension of progressive minds, it is seen before; all the difference is in the power of the mind which can thus see it. In conformity with what we have already remarked, fore-knowledge, which arises from inference, or fore-ordaining, must depend for its certainty on the inferences being necessary, or the decrees absolute; but fore-knowledge, which arises from immediate sight, depends on nothing but the power of thus seeing, neither involving nor requiring any necessity in the events or actions thus seen.

Moral agency has been involved in another difficulty, by viewing the acts of the mind as subject to the law of cause and effect, as is material nature. It has been affirmed, that 'nothing can ever come to pass without a cause, or a reason, why it exists in this manner

rather than another.' And if this be so, 'that it will demonstrably follow, that the acts of the will are never contingent, or without necessity, in the sense spoken of, inasmuch as those things which have a cause, or reason, of their existence, must be connected with their cause.'* And that 'it is as repugnant to reason, to suppose that an act of the will should come into existence without a cause, as to suppose the human soul, or an angel, or the globe of earth, or the whole universe, should come into existence without a cause.'†

The law of cause and effect in material nature is that like agents operating on like subjects, always produce like effects, and, that, within the range of great variety of locality and circumstances; thus humidity and warmth cause seeds to germinate, though these vary very much in degree, and this is true of seeds of all sorts, however much they may differ.

Now supposing us to admit that the operation of external influences on mind were analogous to that of causes in nature, there are no like subjects for these influences to operate on in the world of mind. Difference in thought and sensation constitutes difference in mind, and sensations are excited and thoughts prompted to a great extent by external objects and circumstances; and these cannot be exactly alike to any two active living beings. Suppose two such beings created at the same instant, endowed with exactly the same powers, constituted to think at the same rate, and place side by side in some solitary region. They could not move, except in a direct line, without changing their relative positions, and seeing objects under a different aspect: were they to look at each other, one

* Edward's Works, vol. i. p. 24. † Ibid. p. 17.

would not see the same side of his companion that the other would: were they to look on the ground or on objects very near, the one would not see them under the same angle the other would,—their aspects would not be exactly the same,—their ideas of them could not be therefore exactly similar: were they to communicate with each other, each must be enunciating the same thought to the other at the same moment, else they could not be the same in mind. Such beings could not enjoy any thing of the nature of social intercourse, for the enjoyment of such intercourse depends on the communication of thoughts varying from our own; the incessant communication of the same thought as was in our own minds could bring us no benefit, and would soon become intolerably irksome to us. But no thought could be communicated to the one, differing from that at the instant in the mind of the other, for the moment such were the case, they would cease to be like; and once unlike, they could never become entirely like again. And if beings such as these could not continue like, far less any two human beings; for there never were, nor could be, two of the race of man, born at the time, and who always saw the same objects, heard the same sounds, and touched and tasted the same things. Supposing two human minds at first constituted alike in an active state, they could not continue so an hour. Then, there do not operate the same influences on any two minds; which are some of those things Edwards regards as analogous to causes in the natural world. But the same mind—the subject on which these operate—does not continue a like subject; new sensations are experienced, new thoughts arise, new opinions are formed, and new determinations; the mind is not the same in

regard to these at any two periods. Thus admitting external influences for a moment to operate on the mind in a manner analogous to causes in nature, it does not continue a like subject under them for an hour. It will no doubt be said that material bodies change under the operation of material agents, (and certainly they do, else there could be no causes or effects either) —they change, but it is in a definite mode, and tending towards a certain result.

But we are indeed very far from admitting, that the action of motives on the mind is analogous to the action of causes in material nature. Natural causes operate according to certain laws, varying so as to ensure the production of a vast variety of determinate results, and they have assigned limits beyond which they become quite inoperative: without this their operation could not have that uniformity which evinces the existence of law. In regard to all propagative organized beings, the operation of causes is modified and limited by the nature of the subjects on which they act; each of these is uniformly produced "after his kind." No variety of situation or influence ever transforms one species into another: a new species can be produced only by a new creation. But the causes which contribute to the production and growth of organised beings, have not only these, which may be called lateral limits, but also limits of duration; there is among them an established order of transition and succession, according to which one agent gradually gives place to another, till the proper result is attained,—the plant or animal brought to maturity, when the germ or rudiment of a a new body is produced, destined to the same process of growth, propagation, and decay. On all organised substances, causes or agents operate according to the

law of their nature, unaffected by any voluntary activity or power inhering in them. But voluntary activity is an essential characteristic of rational mind, involving a large measure of power to modify and control at its pleasure the influences which operate on it. The operation of motives or influences on mind differs in this essential particular from the operation of causes in nature, that mind has an elective power; so that how it will act, is a matter for itself to choose, whatever the influences which may operate on it. The action of physical causes on material subjects, is in each case, restricted by the nature of these, to an uniform specific result. But it is quite otherwise with rational mind; though there be presented to it sufficient motives, it has always scope to act on them or against them as it pleases. This is fully proved, we think, by the fact, that motives which under all right exercises of reason, must be regarded as sufficient to stimulate to action, are in innumerable instances resisted; and the concurrent fact, that men often on subsequent reflection perceive the sufficiency of such motives, and deeply blame themselves for not acting on them, while they perceive the insufficiency or deceptive character of those which they approved, and equally blame themselves for yielding to them: all which conspire to prove that, unless the constitution of rational mind be a practical lie, it is not a subject of causation at all analogous to material organizations.

A material body has no power over the influences to which it is subjected: a seed must lie where it is deposited, whether amid moisture or aridity, in a rich or barren soil. It is otherwise quite with a voluntary agent; he can change his situation; he can often choose what objects he will look at, or attend to, what he will

reflect on, and what aspects of them he will contemplate. He has a control over the influences of external nature on him; he is not the creature of circumstances; to a great extent he has the power of moulding and controlling these at his pleasure; as a result of this control over his sensations, reflections, inquiries, and musings, he possesses a control over his moral state or character, as we hope to be able to show in detail below. Man, we thus see, is not the subject of necessity, nor the creature of circumstances, in regard to the objects which as motives influence his choice and his determinations; for he possesses a large amount of power in admitting their influence, in modifying it at his pleasure, or in withdrawing himself from it, and shutting it out altogether.

Since then there is nothing proving necessity in the means by which the mind obtains knowledge, reflects, inquires, and judges in order to its choosing and determining, let us now inquire whether there is any thing proving necessity in the mode by which it is constituted to perform these acts. The will is not properly the faculty or power of choosing: choosing is that process by which among various things that present themselves as eligible to be done, the mind sets itself to examine and weigh the reasons for each; and finding on seeing, what, on all considerations, it seems best to do or do, first, it prefers or chooses that, and in every well-disciplined mind, the act of willing immediately follows which is just the resolution to do it,—that which sets the person to action, or in a state of preparedness for action when the proper time arrives. Much difficulty and confusion has arisen from thinking and speaking of the will, as if it were, somehow, a sort of distinct and active being or person-

ality; when it is only a power which mind possesses of performing a certain class of acts. No act of the will ever terminates on itself: every determination must have an object extrinsic to the mere act of willing; whenever we determine it is to *do* something. The will determining itself is an absurdity. Man is an agent, and the determinations of the will have respect always to action; as the elements by which it determines are without itself, so the objects respecting which it determines are always something other than itself.

Those who contend for what they call the self-determining power of the will, and the necessity of the mind being in a state of indifference in order to freedom, seem to consider it necessary to have a power of willing action in all cases, uninfluenced by any thing previously experienced or done; which is quite incompatible with the unity of progressive being, and which though it were possible, would preclude the development or even existence of character, which is the result of a concatenated series of feelings, thoughts, determinations, and actions: for were there a being who should choose and act uninfluenced by any previous feelings, choice, or actions, such a being would it is obvious be incapable of acquiring any bias or settled inclination either towards good or evil; for such a bias,* so far as it is not original,—and that it could not be in the case we are supposing,—is just the result of the accumulated and connected influence of previous modes of thought and of action.

Equally irrelevant and evincive of equal indistinct-

* The consistency of inclination towards good or evil with moral agency and a state of trial, will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

ness and confusion of conception in those who entertain it, is, that view of the operations of the will, opposite to the one to which we have just adverted, which regards it as determined in every case by motives. This is making that subordinate which is supreme,—the ruler the ruled. The mind is influenced by motives in choosing, and the will determines according to choice. The only exception to this is, when there is such a balancing of motives that the mind is unable to decide which of two things it is best to do, and hesitates awhile, and the proper time for doing either is in danger of passing away; in every well-regulated mind a contempt of indecision or the urgency of acting in some way will become a prevailing motive, and it will fix on either rather than on none. Unless there be much moral obliquity or induration, such a state of mind can only occur in regard to comparatively unimportant matters; and the better the mind is regulated, and the more of energy there is in the character, the more seldom will it occur even in regard to such.

We said that in every well-disciplined mind, the act of willing, or the resolution to do, succeeds that of choosing or approval; this fact, so far from disproving the power of the will, establishes it: for what is it which, in an ill-ordered mind, is allowed to preclude the resolves and efforts of action from succeeding to the discovery of preferableness or of duty? Is it not indolence, or passion, or evil habit? And is it not a proof of power that the will can carry choice into effect, in spite of these? that it can impel the individual to action with a force sufficient to overcome them?

'According,' says Edwards, 'to the hypothesis of the acts of the will coming to pass without a cause, it

is the cause in fact, that millions of millions of events are continually coming into existence *contingently* without any cause or reason why they do so, every day and hour throughout all ages: so it is in a constant succession in every moral agent. This contingency; this efficient nothing; this effectual no-cause, is always ready at hand to produce this sort of effects, so long as the agent exists, and as often as he has occasion.'* One cannot contemplate without astonishment, this attempt, clumsy as it is, to turn into ridicule the efficient power of the human mind, considered as a cause. Is the idea of ascribing causative or productive power to the mind indeed to be sneered at, when we have seen that it has a control even over its sensations,—when it can direct as it pleases its inquiries and reflections,—when it can regulate and control its emotions and passions,—when, if it rightly exercise these powers, it will be qualified to make an independent choice, to choose for itself, and resolutely to act agreeably to such choice! Created mind within a limited sphere is like its great Author, itself an originating power, cognizant of the qualities and relations of matter, and capable, to no contemptible extent, of moulding and directing it at its will. The works of human art, proving man to be possessed of voluntary intelligence and active power, form the basis of the great argument, that the marks of design and power in nature prove it to be the work of an intelligent and all-powerful agent; but where is the legitimacy or force of this argument, if all causative or originating energy is denied to created mind. † If human skill be no cause in the mechanism of a watch, how shall it be proved that Divine skill is any

* Edwards, Vol. i. p. 16. † See Note A.

in the mechanism of a world ? It will be said, this skill is not a result of the human will. I answer, it is greatly so, inasmuch as it is the result of the voluntary, resolute, and protracted application of the human faculties.

Besides all this, if the volitions of created moral agents are necessary, so must those of the Divine Mind be ; for, it is said, as God is necessarily holy, wise, just, and beneficent, he cannot but choose and do what is wisest and best. This view of the Divine character may be just, if the expressions are used merely in a free and popular sense, but cannot if they are taken in a strict and philosophical one. We never think that an action deserving of any praise which a man could not help doing; nor yet one which he does from a prevalent propension. It is essential to the idea of an action deserving praise, not only that he who performs it was under no necessity of doing so, not only that he could have refrained from doing it, but that he could have done so without any discredit, that his not doing it would not have detracted from his character as a man of worth, or made him less respected than his fellows. But the highest praise and admiration are awarded to actions done for the good of others ; the doing of which, subjects one to severe effort and endurance, and demands much sacrifice of personal gratification. So in regard to God, were all his volitions and doings necessary, or such as that they could not have been otherwise, we are unable to see how his wisdom would be entitled to our admiration, or his goodness to our gratitude.

A cramped and scholastic theology may exhibit God as shut up by the necessity of his nature to the doing of what is best, and precluded by the same necessity

from doing any thing wrong or evil; but the Divine character is far too high and expanded to be comprehended within such limits. It is the high and intelligent sense of right and wrong in the Divine Mind which sustains its love of the one and its hatred of the other. It is perilous to represent the Divine conduct as regulated by any thing else than an analogue of that principle by which moral action is regulated in man, and which may be regarded as the fundamental principle of all moral action and order—the moral sense. This principle, while it forbids the least infringement of the rule of right—forbids that less than justice should be done by God to any of his creatures, obstructs not the doing of more, but affords ample scope and range for the exercise of goodness. While it requires whatever promises or pledges God may have given to his creatures to be in every case fulfilled, it obstructs not the range of beneficence "exceeding abundantly beyond" them. It thus affords range without a limit, save the confines of evil, for all the benevolent affections of the Divine Mind to find objects and have play. Here then is a boundless sphere for the freest choice, and ample space for the display of all the lovelier features of the Divine character,—room for all the promptings of benevolent emotion to be obeyed, even to the sublimest heights of sacrificial endurance and effort. And this room for choice neither tends to, nor implies liability to change on the part of God, because choice is not in him as in us, the result of a series of consecutive acts of mind, but the objects of choice, the motives to it, the acts resulting from it, and the consequences of these, are all before his mind at once.

Nearly, if not quite as fatal, to moral agency as the

necessitarian system, is that which restricts freedom to the mere act of willing; denying it wholly to the acts of intelligence and judgment. 'It is not,' says Cousin, 'in the power of man to judge that one motive is preferable to another; we are not masters of our preferences.'* But our preferences are very much as are our inclinations, and our inclinations are very much according to our habits; and habit, as the name implies, is the result of a series of voluntary indulgences. Cousin adds, 'We prefer one motive to another according to our intellectual nature, which has its necessary laws, without having the consciousness of being able to prefer or to judge differently, and even with the consciousness of being unable not to prefer and to judge as we actually do.'† The fallacy of these statements will distinctly appear if we revert for a moment to some of those principles of mental action stated above. The *nature* of our sensations is altogether independent of our will; yet we have seen that they are greatly under our power, first, by the command we have over many of the objects which produce them, and over ourselves in relation to many more. We know, for instance, that thorns pricking our flesh cause pain; but in general we can avoid coming in contact with them. I know that certain objects excite in me improper desires; but in general I can withdraw myself from such objects, or shut my eyes against them. Then we have a measure of power over the continuance and intensity of our sensations and feelings; we can cherish them, we can so reflect as to deepen them; or we can, on the other hand, in most cases modify them, and in many, suppress or extin-

* Exposition of Eclecticism, translated by George Ripley. Note, p. 127. † Ibid.

guish them altogether. And if we have thus no small measure of power over our sensations and emotions; we have much more over our reflections and inquiries. None are so situated but that they can frequently choose the objects of these. The acquisition of knowledge, to a large extent, is in the power of all. There are many objects to which we can give our attention, or from which we can withhold it, and on our attending to objects depends our acquiring just conceptions of them; the impressions they make on the senses give us but their superficial aspects, as it were, intended to excite us to inquire into their nature and relations; according then as we inquire or not, shall we obtain knowledge; and according as we possess knowledge, or want it, shall we judge and conclude,—shall we prefer one motive to another;—a matter thus clearly very much within our power.

Let this be illustrated by an example. A man has got a bruise or contusion in his limb: there is an experienced surgeon in the neighbourhood; but a quack has also recently made his appearance in it, who professes to cure all diseases and heal all wounds, and as if by a sort of magical simplicity of treatment; the man is aware that his pretensions are scouted by all the intelligent people around, he has himself enjoyed means and opportunities of being intelligent, but he has neglected them; he does not seek information; he is credulous,—ignorance is always so,—he prefers the quack. The consequence of this is, he loses his limb, and escapes with his life only by its amputation. Had this man no power to have judged differently? Was it owing to the necessary laws of his intellectual nature, or to the neglect of its powers, that he preferred the quack, and lost his limb? He had not the

power of preferring otherwise at the moment, says Cousin:—'Without doubt, different intelligences, or intelligence in different moments of its exercise, will often pass very different judgments on the same thing. It will even often be deceived; it will judge that what is true is false, that what is good is bad, that what is beautiful is ugly, and the reverse; but at the moment at which it judges that a proposition is true or false, that an action is good or bad, that a form is beautiful or ugly,—at that moment it is not in the power of intelligence to pass a different judgment from that which it does pass; it obeys the laws of its nature which it did not make itself; it yields to motives which determine it without any concurrence of the will. In a word, the phenomena of intelligence to comprehend, to judge, to know, to think, whatever name we give it, is marked by the same characteristic of necessity as the phenomena of sensibility.'* Notable philosophy indeed! to say that we have no freedom in our judgment of truth and right, because, at the moment the mind forms a certain judgment it could not form a different or contradictory one; judging is the result of deliberation, and deliberation cannot in any case be a momentary act. The act of the moment of judging then—the judgment formed—is the result of, and will be according to, the previous deliberation; the conclusion will not only be according to the evidence, but the evidence obtained will be ample or scanty,—will preponderate on this side or on that, very much according as attention is directed and fixed, and inquiry made, which are the mind's voluntary acts. What indeed would the power amount to,

* Exposition of Eclecticism. Note, p. 122.

of being able at the moment we form a certain judgment, to form a contradictory one? what would this be but a power to conclude contrary to the evidence, or the preponderating evidence,—a power of receiving falsehood as truth, or an inability to distinguish between them.

The very same process of reasoning as this, adopted to establish the necessity of the acts of intelligence, would establish the necessity of the acts of the will. When we resolve to do a certain thing, we have always some reason for doing it, rather than doing any other thing, or rather than doing nothing. At the moment when we resolve to do this thing, we could not resolve to do another thing, frustrating the reason or end for which we were resolving to do this; unless we could at the same moment act for a reason, or rationally, and contrary to that reason, or irrationally. *At the moment* the mind is forming a certain resolution, it cannot form a different one,—even allowing it to possess the power of resolving contrary to the motive inducing that certain resolution. Be it that it resolves to act contrary to what is seen to be a proper motive, merely for the purpose of showing it can do so, it cannot resolve to act contrary to this motive at the moment it is resolving to act on this motive; for supposing it resolving to act on the motive, in order to resolve to act contrary to it, it must think of doing so, and approve of doing so, and then the moment of former resolving is gone.

And yet the existence of such a power has been asserted with the most peremptory decision by Cousin, and he has confidently affirmed that our freedom inheres in it alone. 'At the very moment,' says he, 'when it' (the will) 'exercises itself by a special act

of any kind, we have the consciousness that it could exercise itself by a special act of a quite contrary kind, without any obstacle.' Here then in all its perfection is the characteristic of liberty.* Such is the philosophy which is held up before the schools of Europe and America, as embodying the selected and digested truth of all previous systems! †

Every act of mind is connected with some previous act or acts; this does not make the act necessary, but is essential to its rationality: for were every mental act free in the sense apparently attached to freedom by a certain class of philosophers, free in the sense of being independent of all previous acts, mind would act for no reason, and to no end. That this connection, however, does not involve necessity, is what we trust we have already abundantly shown.

These reasonings, if conclusive, against the dogma, that the acts of intelligence are necessary, will be equally so against the dogma, that belief is irresponsible. They must stand or fall together. If we have no control over the judgments or conclusions of our intellect, then we have none over the results of these opinions—we hold the belief we entertain, and for that over which we have no control, we cannot be accountable. But, on the contrary, if it has been proved that we have great power over the processes of attention, inquiry, reflection, and if the nature of the conclusions we arrive at, whether they be correct or incorrect, true or false, depends very much on these; then have we great control over the knowledge we acquire, and by consequence over the opinions we form, and the belief we entertain, and for that over which we have a control, we are responsible.

* Exposition of Eclecticism. Note, p. 128. † See Note, B.

There occurs yet another difficulty. The character of moral action is also greatly dependent on emotion or feeling, (the way in which we will act towards any being will be greatly influenced by the way in which we feel towards him) and are not these constitutional and so physical? and if so, how can the action to which they incite or impel, be moral action according to the definition you have given of it? How can action be free which originates in constitutional or physical propensions or impulses? The fact that there are constitutional impulses to action which comes within the sphere of moral law, would not make that action necessary, or prevent it from being free, unless such impulses were uncontrolable; but so far are they from being so, that it will be found that we have a control over them similar to that which we have ascertained ourselves to be possessed of over our thoughts and volitions. It is not feeling properly that is constitutional or physical, but the capacity of feeling. The constitutional susceptibility of different kinds of emotion requires objects to excite it: the susceptibility may be dormant or unknown, if the the proper object be not brought into view. Feeling is thus excited by the perception or knowledge of objects, and corresponding to the extent we have found man possessed of a control over these, is the measure of his control over those emotions or impulses which influence moral action. The whole intercourse of life is carried on on the conviction, that attention and thought have a high influence on feeling. On this principle the forlorn pauper tells his tale of misfortune, or of suffering; the compassionate listens, and inquires, while the miser and the misanthrope shut their ears, and hasten away. On this principle are

founded the persuasives and remonstrances of friendship, as well as the appeals of the pleader, the preacher, and the poet. Moral law requires rational agents to cultivate certain feelings, the rectitude of such a requirement evidently involves these three conditions, namely, a physical susceptibility of such feelings, the existence of objects suitable for exciting them, and the knowableness of these objects: the absence of either of these conditions would constitute a physical impediment to the generation of the feelings required. The fact of rational agents being responsible for their feelings or passions, involves yet another condition, namely, knowledge of what feelings the law requires. With this knowledge the mind can set itself to inquire about the object of the feeling demanded, and if it properly consider and weigh the obligation, it will make all the inquiry possible, contemplating it under every aspect, and if the object is properly knowable, and suited to excite the feeling required, and if the mind is susceptible of it, the production of such feeling will be the result.

SECTION III.

OF THE KIND OF KNOWLEDGE WHICH IS THE GROUND OF MORAL AGENCY.

Knowledge is the mental perception or apprehension of existing objects, of their relations and qualities, and of the thoughts and actings of intelligent beings. Truth is the ground of correct knowledge, or that which, in knowing, the mind perceives or apprehends, whether it be derived immediately from objects themselves, or from other minds, through the medium of articulate sounds or conventional signs. All knowledge results from diversity; knowledge of objects involves a distinction between them, and things can be distinguished only by their differences. Without diversity there could be no relations. Without diversity there could indeed be but one existence, for absolute sameness cannot be conceived of but as identity. Every being possessing consciousness, and the conscious exercise of the bodily senses, has a certain amount of involuntary knowledge, or such as it cannot but possess, e. g.—the knowledge of its own existence, of thought, of the external world and the obvious

aspect of the objects on it. Beyond or beneath this there is a large amount, first, of necessary truth; but whether we become cognizant of it depends on the voluntary exercise of our own powers,—we cannot obtain the knowledge of such truth unless we examine and infer; of this sort are all the properties and relations of mathematical lines and figures. Then there is a vast amount of truth involved in the physical constitution and relations of universal being, ascertainable by observation and experiment. This sort of truth is certain as contradistinguished from necessary, inasmuch as it is uniform, or, certain things are always found existing after the same manner, without any reason assignable that they must be so, e. g.—between different species of plants and animals the specific differences are invariably maintained; this is a certain fact, yet there are no data warranting us to pronounce that it must necessarily be so. There is another order of knowledge, embracing whatever may be ascertained or inferred with preponderating probability respecting mind, and the actings of voluntary agents, beyond that which is physical or which belongs to their constitution. This sort of knowledge, the philosophy of voluntary and moral action, can never attain the same sort of certitude as the philosophy of physical nature, owing to the universal diversity of mind, arising from this, that while natural agents act or change in an established order, or according to fixed laws, choice and volition enter as elements into the actings of intelligent beings. The relations of physical facts are fixed and determinate, therefore every fact of this kind can at once be assigned to its proper place and rank when these relations are known; but the relations of moral facts, or the voluntary actings of

mind, are ever varying; and as every act of mind is related to, and liable to be influenced by, every previous act of mind, and yet no certainty how it shall be influenced by it, or whether at all,—and as all the previous actings in any two minds never are the same, no voluntary fact can occur in any two minds in exactly the same relations. From this cause too, and from the nature of language, chiefly and primarily adapted to represent material objects and operations, arises the difficulty of accurately expressing mental facts. Thus is the science of mind, in all its voluntary actings, involved in difficulties altogether unknown to the physical sciences. We know nothing of the essence either of mind or matter; we know both only by their qualities or powers; we are conscious of thought, of feeling, and of will, but not of the substance that thinks, and feels, and wills. Whatever in mind is physical, or belongs to its constitution, may be strictly ascertained. We know that it has the power of thinking, of feeling, of examining, of comparing, of remembering, of judging, and of willing; but when we come to inquire into the laws which regulate the performance of these acts, the voluntary principle immediately meets us, under the controul of which, each of these operations, more or less, is; and a strict inquiry will lead us to the conclusion that, while intelligent mind is, in its actings, open to a thousand influences, it is constituted so as to be in these subject to no *law* but the moral, or that which regulates an intelligent choice. True it is that intelligent agents are actuated by propensions or dispositions, but these are physical just so far as they are not and cannot be brought under the controul of the voluntary principle or will. The less that voluntary power is exercised, the more

do mental actings become physical or subject to exterior influences. Thus it is that the actings or operations of mind are limited on both hands; those intelligent agents who exercise self-control do so according to moral law; they regulate their minds and conduct by it. Those who do not exercise self-control become in their actings subject to physical influences, so that their acts are directed by the influences brought to bear upon them. Thus, may we remark, in passing, do we see, how entirely wicked men—those who do not govern their own propensions and passions—are under the Divine controul; as God has entirely at his command the influences to which they are subjected. Thus it is only the good, those who control their propensions and regulate themselves by moral law, who are truly free.

In connection with the preceding observations we may remark, though it belongs not strictly to our present subject, that all possible knowledge ranges itself under three great divisions: Mathematics, or the science of necessary relations; Physics, or the science of established relations; and Ethics, or the science * of voluntary relations. The first embraces whatever may be established by demonstration; the second whatever may be ascertained by observation and experiment; and the third, whatever influences, regulates, and results from voluntary agency, of which moral law embodies the rule, poetry, the motive influences, and history the actings. We have seen above that there is so much knowledge that cannot but be possessed by every conscious intelligent being; but the distinction is carefully to be noted between this involuntary

* I use the word science here, the reader will perceive, in the widest sense of knowledge.

knowledge and necessary truth. So much of knowledge is not only acquired without any voluntary effort, but owing to our constitution and circumstances we acquire it inevitably, but it does not follow at all that the truth thus known is necessary truth; that such knowledge is inevitable does not result from the nature of the truth known, but from the nature and circumstances of the agent knowing it. The nature of the knowledge does not at all determine the nature of the truth known; for while there is much that is necessarily known which is not necessary truth, there is much necessary truth of which not only is the knowledge not inevitable, but never possessed by myriads of intelligent beings. In whatever degree any knowledge may fall short of complete certainty in finite minds, to whatever degree it may be open to doubt, there cannot be such a thing as truth in itself uncertain, this would be a contradiction in terms. To a being of limited powers and attainments, it may be doubtful whether this or that statement or opinion be a truth, as he may not have the means of fully ascertaining its correctness, but there cannot be such a thing as a truth doubtful in itself. The certainty of truth (we cannot express our meaning fully without this seeming pleonasm), results from all existences, events, and relations, being distinguishable each from every other. Were such a thing possible as for two beings to exist which could not in any way be distinguished the one from the other, this would make some truth respecting them uncertain, for if they could not possibly be known in any way the one from the other, it could not be certain which was which, it would not be certain that the one was not the other, and it would of necessity be a truth that the one could not be the

other, for this it could be not unless they were but one. If there were nothing in the time, place, or circumstances of their existence by which they could be distinguished, it could not be known that they were two, and yet the supposition is based on their duality. Were such a case possible, it would involve an uncertainty of truth; not merely that it would be uncertain to a mind of limited capacity, but inasmuch as it would be absolutely unknowable. That no such case, however, can occur among intelligent beings, has been already shown, and that it cannot occur in any case is evident, inasmuch as things cannot but differ in some respect unless they be the same, unless it were possible for a thing to be the same, and yet not the same at one time. Every existence, event, and relation, then, in the universe, being distinguishable from every other, not only is all truth certain, but knowable with certainty to a being of sufficient range of observation and perceptive power. Yet neither does its quality, of being knowable with certainty, nor its being actually so, known by such a being, constitute it necessary; for were it so, that would make all existence necessary, and all events and relations necessary, which is far indeed from being accordant with fact. No existence is necessary, but such as could not but have been; and no relation or property is necessary, but such as could not possibly have been otherwise. Moreover, whatever has a necessary existence must have an eternal existence: eternity is involved in its necessity; otherwise it would not be true that it could not but have been, for if it were not eternal, a period might be assigned, when it not only was possible for it not to have existed, but when it actually did not exist. Necessity of relations or properties does not involve necessity of exist-

ence in the subjects of these relations. That it was ever a necessary truth that the three angles of a triangle must be equal to two right angles, did not make the actual existence of a single such figure necessary, only that if any did exist it could not but exist so. Necessary existence is uncaused existence; that which has any ground or cause of existence anterior to itself is not necessary. Necessary relations are uncaused *as* relations, they are not as such the result of any causative agency, but are necessarily involved in the existence of the objects of which they are relations. But it does not follow from necessary relations being uncaused, that the objects are uncaused of which they are the relations; that pane of glass was certainly *made*, though as a parallelogram, its corresponding sides are necessarily parallel and equal. Yet had all relations and properties in the universe been necessary, it could not have been proved, but that it might have had a necessary and consequently uncaused existence. But relations and properties not necessary must be caused. Things commencing, continuing, and terminating their existence in a uniform manner, or after a regular order, cannot be necessary, but must owe their existence with its mode and duration to some exterior and adequate cause, *e. g.* to revert to an illustration formerly employed: A certain kind of seed is deposited in the ground, and it springs up and becomes a tree: it was owing to no necessary property of seeds that this particular one became a tree, else all seeds would produce trees, for a necessary property is an invariable property. But it may be alleged that it necessarily became a tree from the nature of the seed. But how came the seed to be of such a nature? This could not result from any necessary property of matter, else there could

not possibly be any other kind of seed. But if the existence of an arboreal seed cannot be the result of any necessary property of matter, it must be owing to some power superior to matter, and capable of moulding and controlling it, for that which can give form and capabilities to anything, above what it possesses by its mere nature, must be superior to that thing. Moreover, if every different kind of seed uniformly produces a different kind of plant, and each plant the same sort of seed as that from which it was produced itself, and that seed the same sort of plant again in invariable succession, this involves a designing power, or one which controls and fashions matter according to fixed and diversified models, and in order to determinate and diversified ends.

It may here be proper to glance for a moment at the powers of mind adapted to judge of and receive these different orders of truth. The distinction so earnestly asserted by Mr. Coleridge between reason and understanding is, I conceive, valid and proper; but he appears to me widely to have gone astray in his attempt to discriminate between them, by assigning the distinct characteristics and functions of each.* With these two, in a right estimate of an intelligent, voluntary, and responsible agent, is to be classed another, namely, the moral sense,—and then the three may be thus distinguished:—understanding, which has long since been properly described, as the faculty; judging according to sense, from the forms, qualities, and dispositions of matter, deduces necessary relations and established laws: reason is the faculty, judging according to evidence, distinguishing between true and false in matters of fact, judging between all the different degrees of probability in matters of opinion: the

* Note C.

moral sense is the faculty, judging of right and wrong in matters of conduct, accompanied by a peculiar and appropriate order of feeling, indicating and giving sanction to its decisions. Associated with, and auxiliary to these, are three other powers, memory, imagination, and the will: memory to bring forward previously ascertained facts and inferences as the ground of induction and reasoning; imagination to supply possible combinations and relations among which to compare, judge, and discriminate; and the will to carry out into action the decisions of the moral sense. According to this view, then, of the powers of rational and accountable mind, the functions of understanding are demonstration, or the deduction of necessary inferences from self-evident truths, those known intuitively, perceived by the senses; or previously ascertained facts, and generalization, or the tracing and developing of the same principle as operating in the production of widely different phenomena. Reason is conversant with whatever has a relation to voluntary action, and is not capable of being established by strict induction or by demonstration. Understanding is conversant with necessary and established or physical relations; reason with whatever is involved in, or results from, voluntary and moral relations. When a man cannot comprehend any axiom, or calculation, or mechanical principle which we clearly understand, and deem of easy comprehension, we call him dull and stupid; but when a man refuses to be swayed by, or to yield to persuasives, which approve themselves to our judgment as fully sufficient, and are known to harmonize with the general judgment of mankind; when he refuses to be swayed by the greatly preponderating reasons which have been clearly laid before him, we call him unrea-

sonable ; but we never call a man unreasonable for not understanding an axiom, or a proposition, or any principle of physical science. But when a man admits the dictates and conclusions of sound reason, when he acknowledges that his actions should be according to them ; when he acknowledges that such a course is right, yet neglects to pursue it ; when he admits that such another is wrong, yet indulges in it,—we call not such an one stupid, we call not him unreasonable, we call him bad or immoral ; in such a man it is not the understanding that is weak or dull, not the power of judging, or reason, but the sense of moral obligation. The object then to which the moral sense has relation, is moral law, or the sanctioned rule which distinguishes right from wrong ; it differs from reason in this, that reason has its relation to rational (probable) truth, or what is to be believed ; the moral sense has its relation to duty or what is to be done. The one is guided to its conclusions by evidence, the other is ruled in its decisions by authority, vindicated at the promulgation of law by external proofs and symbols, and sustained in every breast in which conscience is not perverted by false teaching, and not stifled or indurated by sin, by the coincident sanctions of moral feeling. So far then as conduct is dependent on belief, so far is the moral sense dependent for the rectitude of its decisions on the right exercise of the rational powers. But if there be any such thing as an immediate or intuitive sense or perception of duty, independent of knowledge from exterior sources, unconnected with any present or previous exercise of reason, so far as there were any such, if any such there be, so far would the moral sense in its actings be independent on reason. But this, at any rate, cannot be the case where knowledge

of law is derived from any external source, for whenever law is thus known, the decisions of conscience will depend in some degree on the exercise of reason. For though reason has nothing to do in any case to judge whether a law is such as should be obeyed; when once it is known to be a law, it is the province of reason to judge in regard to everything put forth as such, whether it be really a law; that is, whether there is sufficient evidence of its emanating from one whose right it is to promulge it. Whatever conclusions we may arrive at respecting the power of conscience to decide independently of reason, a question we shall revert to below, this far may be affirmed without question, that the peculiar order of feeling which the moral sense embodies, and with which it is armed, serves to authenticate intimations of moral law received from exterior sources, and to sanction acting on them, when without it they would be involved in the most painful incertitude.

Man, as a being constituted and designed for moral action, is to a high degree susceptible of the impression, that he lives and acts under invisible governing or retributive power—an impression which all the objects and events around him conspire to produce; and has a perception of the moral character of actions, or of a right and a wrong, springing out of this sense of responsibility, combined with the consciousness of freedom to act according to choice.

Right and wrong are not, and cannot be absolute, but are relative, arising out of the relations of intelligent and accountable creatures, presupposing these in order to their possibility. And as they are not absolute, so neither are they necessary, like the relations of mathematical lines and figures; it is not said of moral relations as of mathematical, that they *must* be so, but that

they *ought* to be so, implying that the conduct proper to these relations is not of the kind which springs from a necessity of nature in the beings related, but has for its regulation a law or standard, congruous to their nature, but addressed to their voluntary recognition, and requiring a voluntary conformity. Thus moral law, though in its great and immutable features always in harmony with reason, is never susceptible of demonstration. Though, apart from the knowledge of such law, reason may, in regard to many things coming within its scope, conclude that thus and thus it *should be ;* it is not entitled in any case to say that from the nature of things thus and thus it *must be.*

While thus, reason, when rightly exercised, may to a certain extent ascertain, and the heart, when under proper culture and discipline, indicate—what is due to our fellow men,—while it may be an immediate suggestion of the heart on just reflection, that " what we would that others should do to us we should do even so to them," and thus man may " do" so far " by nature the things contained in the law ;" it is only when we act under a sense of accountableness to invisible power, that conscience awakes to utter either its accusing or excusing voice. Without a sense of responsibility, questions of right and wrong degenerate into mere questions of expediency, or of profit and loss. Thus the sense of responsibility being thus involved in every exercise of conscience, that and that only can be felt as a matter of moral obligation, respecting which the divine will is believed to have been indicated or expressed, enjoining or forbidding it ; nothing comes within the range of conscience, but what is somehow perceived to be, or deemed a subject of, divine law. Truth and falsehood are matters of direct consciousness, and jus-

tice is an immediate dictate of reflective feeling; but speaking the truth and rendering to all their dues are felt to be matters of conscience only when we feel accountable for how we act in these respects to Invisible authority.

But how come we to the knowledge of this law, a belief or sense of which is thus involved in every exercise of conscience? Has conscience not only the power of perceiving actions *as* right and *as* wrong, but an immediate perception of what *is* right and what *is* wrong, 'independent of any acquired knowledge, and without reference to any other standard of duty.' The reader conversant with mental and moral science is aware that this is one of the most difficult questions connected with the philosophy of the human mind; and in entering on an inquiry, in order if possible to make some advance towards its solution, it shall be our special endeavour to guard against any appearance of dogmatising, as, than that nothing could be more unbecoming in a matter involved in so much obscurity. We may observe in the outset that the question is by no means settled by the fact,—though it might appear at first sight to be so,—that no voluntary action can be performed without having been first in thought. For though no such action can be performed without an exercise of reason, or a recurrence to a previous exercise of it in a like case, in order to the ascertaining whether the action is practicable, or eligible, or urgent, yet the decisions of conscience are anterior to action in all things of a moral nature, and indeed its voice is the first that should be heard in the soul when any thing coming under that class is proposed to be done. An action may present itself as desirable, and previously known to be practicable, respecting which the

instantaneous decision of conscience may be that it is wrong, and must not be done. Now the question is whether the human mind was constituted with the power of feeling certain acts to be right and others wrong, immediately, without reverting to any standard, or only with the capacity of doing so with the greatest promptitude, on the ground of law somehow known. Had the mind been endowed with the power of immediate and independent moral judgment, it appears to us that there could have been no connection between the exercise of the rational principle and the moral sense, no subserviency of the rational to the efficiency of the moral principle, or the advancement of the moral being, which is entirely incongruous to the constitution of the world, as well as contrary to the universal sense of mankind, and utterly inconsistent with the express declarations of Scripture. Besides, were moral judgment in any case entirely independent of knowledge, would not this make it in such a case instinctive; and the actions it might originate of the nature of instinctive actions? If the instantaneous effect of the perception of certain objects were—let us call it—a moral sensation, passing immediately into an impulse stimulating to action, or restraining from it, without any intervention of thought or choice, any reference to previous knowledge, this would make the action physical, as certainly resulting from constitutional powers, instead of moral and resulting from choice. But that there is no such acting of conscience, is evident from the vast disparity in the moral views and conduct of men, compared with the unvarying certitude of instinct. There is another way however in which moral judgments might be immediate or independent of any exercise of reason; if the knowledge of what is

right and wrong were intuitive, or such as is self-evident—incapable of proof and independent of it. Now it is to be observed, that though the capacity of distinguishing right from wrong, or of apprehending moral distinctions, is an original power of the human mind: it no more follows that the notions of actions as thus distinguished, are innate in the mind by means of this power, than it does from the capacity of seeing possessed by the eye—that the images of external objects are innate there.

The universal conviction that there is a right and a wrong, shows that men are constituted with the power of perceiving things under a moral aspect. But, as in the case of natural seeing, their being rightly perceived and distinguished will depend on the soundness of the percipient power, on the objects being within its range, and attention being given to them. The eye, when in a diseased state, may give very distorted views of objects to the mind, and could not convey any knowledge to it if placed in vacuity, and though abundance of objects be before it, will convey very little, unless some measure of attention be given to them. Agreeably to this, we find that those who act with moral correctness, are considerate and circumspect; while those who live immoral lives are thoughtless, inconsiderate, or have their consciences seared. Analogous to the other senses, the moral sense possesses not a *revealing*, but a percipient or discerning power. What reason might perceive as only desirable or expedient, or might regard as doubtful, it recognises as moral, or subject to divine law: and man being constituted to submit to spiritual authority when perceived, the instantaneous result of the perception of anything as a subject of moral law, is (in every

rightly-ordered mind) a feeling of obligation. Let anything be perceived as law, and immediately it is echoed and sanctioned by the voice within. There is no questioning why or how the law is such, because the mind has an original constitution adapted to harmonise with it. Let the subject of law be thought, or feeling, or conduct, it matters not, only if it be something capable of being performed—something which the agent has it in his power to do.

Whether conscience be a judge of right and wrong 'independent of any acquired knowledge, and without reference to any other standard of duty,' may be brought to such a test as this:—Is there any instance to be found of the moral sense, at once directing or impelling a person to correct any article of belief held by the sect to which he belongs, or any course of conduct sanctioned or enjoined by the moral code which his sect regards as of divine authority, without in any way reflecting on or inquiring about such principle or conduct? If any well-authenticated instances could be produced, of conscience alone thus spontaneously proclaiming and enforcing what is right, independently of whatever may be held, or taught and practised by others as of divine authority, then we should admit, that in the case of some at least, conscience is a judge of right and wrong, 'independent of any acquired knowledge, and without reference to any other standard of duty, and yet, unless it did so universally, or with only a few explicable exceptions, it would not be entitled to be regarded as a fact in the constitution of human nature. But is such at all the case? On the contrary, do not we see men on all hands clinging to error, and persisting in wrong-doing, even when truth and duty are clearly set before them, and their momen-

tous sanctions solemnly and earnestly pressed on their consideration. In view of these facts, what can we think of conscience as an independent monitor of right, and standard of duty? That such a faculty may seem necessary to some men's idea of a perfect humanity is certainly no proof, especially in the present state of human nature, that it exists in fact. When persons become dissatisfied with the religious system under which they have been brought up, does not their dissatisfaction spring from doubt? and does not doubt imply reflection or inquiry? But were there an intuitive perception of right and wrong, which one, independent of acquired knowledge, and of all reference to a standard of duty, must be, it would preclude all doubt, for we neither doubt what we clearly see, nor what we distinctly feel: doubt arises when the certainty of anything depends on something else respecting which we are uncertain, and which, if capable of being known at all, requires inquiry, or an exercise of thought and reasoning, in order to ascertain it. An intuitive and authoritative revelation by, or in, the moral sense, would, as far as it extended, exclude religious doubt, for if it did not, it would neither be immediate nor authoritative; yet we find that in all cases in which a change in one's religious belief occurs, it originates in doubt, is wrought out by inquiry, and completed in conviction. Thus it is in the various spheres of missionary labour,—those who are dissatisfied with the religion of their country, and have thought of embracing Christianity, are designated 'inquirers,' and in harmony with this is the language of Scripture, Prov. ii. 2, 9—13. "If thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment,

and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul, discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee; to deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness." *

But conscience, it is said, is the voice of God in the soul, announcing and sanctioning his law. But without some fixed standard by which to test the genuineness of these internal revelations, how are we to know what are such? Are they distinguishable from the operations of our own minds? If they are, in what way? By any manifestation to the senses?—That agrees not with the hypothesis we are considering. By the peculiar nature of the attendant feeling? If that is the attestation of the voice of Deity, how comes it that this special feeling has sanctioned actions directly contrary in different individuals? If from a principle of conscience, much good has been done; from the same principle have been committed the greatest crimes; men have killed the excellent of the earth because in this they thought they were doing "God service." The perception that actions are right or wrong is not obtained from this peculiar feeling, excited previous to any perception, but the feeling results from the perception, or is produced by it. A certain action is perceived as wrong; can it be perceived as such without something being known as right, to which it is opposed, or without some standard or rule on which it infringes? Feelings anterior to, or independent of, knowledge or perception, must be purely physical, and if our moral

* Note D.

judgments were the result of such feeling this would again land us in the conclusion that our moral judgments are physical, a plain contradiction in terms. Thus, were our moral perceptions intuitive, or the certain result of a peculiar feeling, there would be no room for choice, no exercise of the moral principle in forming them, and no trial of disposition. We are then, on every hand, held back from the conclusion that moral judgments are the result of intuitive knowledge, or peculiar feeling, independent of any exercise of reason, or the knowledge of any public or traditionary standard. But then, on the other hand, it is equally evident that these judgments involve something more than a mere modification of the exercise of reason, namely, a *moral sense* having its relation, not to the reasonableness of moral law, but to its authority, perceiving, recognising, and submitting to it as emanating from Spiritual Power. Connected with this power or faculty thus specially adapted to the perception of moral distinctions, is the susceptibility of a peculiar order of feeling, prompting to act according to such perception, and restraining from acting contrary to it, and deriving much of its intensity from a belief that for the manner in which we act, we are accountable to Omnipotent governing power, and that our moral conduct involves the most momentous and permanent personal consequences. Thus the moral sense, from the very nature of the objects to which it has relation, stands altogether unique in its keenness and profundity among the susceptibilities of the mind, constituted specially for recognising invisible governing power, and involving a sense of such power in all its exercises. Conscience, when otherwise it might seem dormant, evinces its life in those undefined but

deep-seated fears which are not referable to any visible or mundane object. It thus in the original constitution of man, appears to have been a power specially adapted to the vicegerency with which it was intrusted,—alert in recognising its master's voice from afar. The limitations and obstructions of its efficient authority in the present state of human nature will be considered by and by. There is a peculiarity belonging to the susceptibility connected with the moral sense which should be carefully noted: the feeling is not at all so keen nor strong in the impulse it gives to right action, as is that by which it guards against what is seen to be wrong; if there is a propension in our nature, as it at present subsists, toward evil, there is also a powerful restraint upon it.

We have already observed that moral law generally approves itself to rational judgment, or, that on reflection we may perceive reasons, in the nature and conquences of actions, why that which the law prescribes should be done, and that which it prohibits, avoided; but, as we have already hinted, our moral perceptions and judgments are by no means dependent on any such appearances. Let the moral sense perceive that any thing is a command given by the rightful law, and although reason should discern nothing as to why such a command *should* be given, its recognition and enforcement by conscience, if that is in a sound state, will be immediate and instantaneous; and thus there comes to our view an additional evidence that conscience is not merely a modification of the reasoning faculty, or an exercise of reason, deriving its speciality from the nature of the objects it bears upon,—for reason invariably arrives at its conclusions by the perception of evidence why a thing should be so. The moral

sense is not independent of the exercise of reason, but it has distinct functions; all the powers of the human mind are connected so as that one subserves the efficiency of the other, but that is certainly no reason why we should confound them.

Furthermore, the very perversions of conscience serve to attest its original and indestructible character as an element of the constitution of man. Whatever confusion or misplacement of right and wrong may have prevailed among mankind, moral distinctions have them recognised universally. Of mankind there has never existed tribe or tongue, that has not acknowledged that there is a right and a wrong; for there never was any community, the members of which did not attach blame to each other for certain parts of their conduct; and blame, as we have elsewhere shewn, proceeds invariably from the sense of wrong. The greater the perversions of conscience, the more is its individuality and indestructible nature evinced. In such cases it is more reason than conscience that is at fault; the mind does not examine the evidence for that religious system of which such perversions are principles. For these contrarieties in the voice of conscience to the true standard of right, universally arise from a received religious system. Never has wrong been done from a principle of conscience but it has been done as an act of worship, or of obedience to some superior power. Conscience even in these melancholy cases is ever true to its function of being the internal enforcer of moral authority. We must not overlook the fact, that even in these cases there is some knowledge of what is regarded as moral law. Conscience, where the agent is sane, never rests merely on individual conviction, but is in all cases sustained, by at least some traditionary

or sectarian, if not public and documentary belief that the deities it worships, exist, and that the homage or service it renders, is acceptable to them.

If then, there is any validity in these reasonings, they conduct us to the conclusion, that all moral action is connected with knowledge, inasmuch as it is regulated by moral law, which by its very nature can have no power but so far as it is known, which governs by sanctions, that are neither demonstrable, nor addressed to the senses, but to reason ; and in respect to which, reason has to judge as to the evidence of its emanating from the rightful authority. Moral action then is grounded on the knowledge of law, and this law, though it addresses itself directly to the conscience, yet appeals to reason in the evidence it brings of its origin or source.

Strictly and directly then, those states of mind and those actions, only, are moral, which are the subjects of moral law : other actions are matters of judgment, or prudence, the doing of which is characterized as wise or unwise, rash or considerate, prudent or imprudent. Indirectly, however, all action and even thought has a moral bearing, inasmuch as all action and even thought is calculated to advance or hinder our own good or the good of others. The concatenated sequences of our individual being, and the influence of individual action on society, make it so, that there is no exercise of thought and no external act, but what, for aught we can tell, may have an important influence on our own well-being, or on that of others. Consequently, as our duty to all, as well as to ourselves, is love, and as love prompts to good offices, all action and even thought has a moral bearing. But then in regard to whatever is not the subject of explicit moral

precept, it is a question for reason to examine whether it should be done or not, and its morality is according to its reasonableness, it is matter of duty only in as far as it approves itself to reason as likely to do good, or be useful on the whole; whereas the morality of what is matter of direct precept is no further dependent on any exercise of reason, than as it is satisfied that the precept is a moral law. There is no moral principle called into exercise in the reception of mathematical truth if we direct our minds to its investigation; but indirectly moral principles may have a bearing on our decision, whether we shall enter on such investigations; as it may be a question whether we can do so consistently with the right discharge of imperative duties. So in regard to physical inquiries, the discovery of physical relations and laws does not directly call into exercise any moral principle—the moral state of our minds does not influence our conclusions regarding them; yet indirectly such discoveries have a moral bearing like the former, inasmuch as not only does all useful knowledge tend to expand and invigorate the mind, but all new disclosures of the system of nature tend to increase and ennoble our conceptions of the perfections of God. Physical relations and laws belong to the understanding, and power or capacity to trace them does not depend on the right moral state of the mind; but the moral inferences deducible from these, belong to the province of reason; and whether they are rightly deduced, and in many cases whether they are deduced at all, will depend much on the moral habits, and the state of moral feeling.

Moral law, then, by its very nature has always admitted of choice in regard to its reception as such. It has never come to the mass of mankind in a way

that irresistibly evinced its origin—as by unambiguous intuition, by demonstration, or by indubitable representations to the senses. Law promulged from heaven has addressed the evidence of its divinity to the reason of mankind; the only exception to this is in the case of those to whom it was primarily and originally revealed, and that is hardly an exception, as but a small portion of revelation was originally communicated to the same individuals; the evidence for the rest was the same to them as to others. And then the sanctions of this law are, to all, future and unseen, influencing by addressing themselves to reason, and not to the senses by visible representation, nor to the understanding by demonstration, yet sustained in a highly preponderating probability by the nature of moral feeling.

Thus do we see, that so far as moral action is based on knowledge, or connected with it, it is neither the knowledge we have by consciousness, nor that which we inevitably receive through the medium of the senses, nor that which results from demonstration, or strict induction, but is of that kind which is cognizable by reason, which rests on evidence, which in no case excludes the possibility of doubt, and consequently in no case precludes the exercise of choice in regard to its reception: in a word it is such as is fully compatible with moral agency—that is, with free action, regulated and directed by choice, which necessary, or intuitive, or demonstrative knowledge, could not have been.

For had all knowledge been inevitable, or such as required no voluntary effort to obtain it, there could have been no scope for anything of the nature of moral agency, no choice in regard to its acquisition. Anything of personal improvement by voluntary exertion would have been impossible. A being consti-

tuted to receive knowledge only in this way, must have received its full complement at once, or it must have been impelled to whatever place it was to receive more, or to whatever acts might be required for this purpose, without anything of the nature of will of its own: anything of voluntary exertion in pursuit of knowledge being incompatible with an involuntary imposition or instilment of it. No doubt we can conceive of intelligent beings physically impelled from land to land, and from world to world, somewhat like the planets in their orbs, gathering up, or perhaps we might more properly say, imbibing knowledge in their course; but whatever might be their recipient capacity for truth, they could be but a sort of conscious machines at best, being by their constitution incapable of any social connexion above what might be secured by instinct, and incapable of any sentiment other than physical, or what is the result of exterior influences.

Then again, had the knowledge of all truth been by intuition or demonstration, there could have been no scope for anything moral or any choice in its reception, for the knowledge obtained in either of these ways, if obtained at all, is obtained with absolute certainty, and a truth that presents itself with absolute certainty; or is demonstrated, leaves no room for choice whether we will receive it or not; a demonstrated truth when the demonstration is comprehended precludes all doubt. Further, admitting of no medium between entire ignorance and absolute certainty, it would scarcely have comported with moral agency in action, for there could have been little trial of moral principle or disposition, had right and wrong with their eternal consequences, been in every case so certain, or seen so fully, that it was impossible to start

a doubt respecting the one, or conceive the shadow of an excuse for the other.

Further still, however, it requires to be noted, that the knowledge meant to bear immediately on moral action, which God has been pleased to impart to man, has ever borne the form of a testimony; it has never been certified by demonstration, nor 'imposed' by any faculty, power, or principle in our own minds. Now our minds are constituted to receive what comes to us in the form of testimony; whatever another relates to us as truth, we have a disposition to believe as it thus comes to us, and it occasions a painful revulsion of feeling, when it so clearly controverts our former knowledge as to make it obvious it must be false. However, when we know nothing against what another testifies to us, it is in our nature to receive it as true. The fulness of our assent or conviction is connected with our knowledge of the character of the relater; if we know him to have a character for veracity—that he has a reverence for truth, and an abhorrence of falsehood—it gives us confidence in what he says, we rely on his character for truthfulnesss though all other evidence of what he relates may be wanting: in other words, we have faith in him. Such is the mode in which God has communicated to us moral knowledge, sometimes indeed he gives reasons for his commands, and condescends to place before us the proof of what he says; but oftener he simply declares his will, accompanied by the sanction which he has placed to enforce obedience, making our belief to rest immediately on his word, always however accompanying it with sufficient evidence that it *is his* word. Thus it was in the instance of the first command given to man, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou

shalt not eat, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Thus the command is at once a rule of life and a test of his creature's feeling towards himself. A result of the tendency in our minds to receive what comes to us in the form of testimony, is, that a contrary statement to one we have already believed, tends to shake this belief, and then it is for reason to judge which is most likely to be true. Apart from each of such contradictory statements being testified to us, is there any evidence of one being true rather than the other; or if there is no such evidence, is there from what we know of the character of the relaters, more reliance to be placed on the one than on the other? Thus may we perceive what should be the functions of reason when what is known to be a divine testimony is controverted. Is it the character of God or that of the controverter that gives most sanction to his statements?

That the true foundation of religion is a declaration or testimony of the divine will and purpose, approves itself to the universal sense of mankind. Every form of religion which has obtained votaries in the world, has professed to be a revelation from heaven —a declaration of the will of the gods. No enthusiast ever thought of promulging a new faith without claiming for it such an origin. Schemes of spiritual philosophy and of morals, may be reared from another basis, but other foundation for a religion among beings who have forfeited the Divine favour, than the will of him who is the object of worship and submissive obedience, somehow made known, is utterly inconceivable. The will of any moral agent,—much more that of the Supreme and Almighty Governor,—is something which from its very nature cannot be

discovered with any certainty, unless it be somehow declared; it belongs neither to the department of necessary truth, nor of physical or established truth, but of voluntary truth, or such as may be communicated or withheld at pleasure. Such is every thing belonging to the will and purposes of a voluntary agent, until declared by him or evinced in action. The existence, and to a certain extent the character of God, are manifested in his works; but His will in regard to what he requires from us, is discoverable from these only to a very limited extent. Can we, from our own constitution, or the objects around us, discover what worship will be proper to our situation, or acceptable to Him? Is there any unambiguous evincement and vindication of moral law in the present world, in the consequences attending moral action? Are one set of actions uniformly attended with good consequences, or rewarded, and another as uniformly attended with evil consequences, or punished? Or, is not each of these so far from being uniformly the case as to justify the declaration of the preacher, that good or evil is not known by anything that is done under the sun? Do not the existing constitution of nature, and the administration of providence, present many facts very difficult to reconcile with the government of a being, at once of strict justice, and boundless benevolence? Without any other clue to the character of God or the destiny of man, than what is found in the constitution of nature and the course of events, we see in what painful perplexity a thoughtful mind is involved in the exclamation of the ancient sage*—'I have

* Aristotle. I cite from memory, and am sensible the first part of the quotation is verbally inaccurate.

lived in doubt, and die in uncertainty. O thou cause of causes, have mercy on me!' The need for such a ground for religious faith and divine worship has been made most manifest, by the incertitude and perversions to which these have been incident in every country in which the revelation vouchsafed of heaven has not been specially preserved. Even the obvious (as we should think) obligation of the duties arising out of the most intimate relations, has not preserved them from systematic violation, nor prevented the opposite crimes from being extensively practised, connived at, legalized, and even regarded as sacred observances and perpetrated from a principle of conscience: as witness, the exposure of infants in China, the legalization of theft in Sparta, and Thuggee, and the burning of widows in Hindustan.

The Scriptures represent the voice of nature under the character of a testimony to the Divine wisdom and glory: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Yet this testimony as well as that of revelation may be rejected; it does not compel men to receive it; on the contrary to read it aright requires an observant eye and a teachable heart.

"The works of the Lord are great, *sought out* of all them that have pleasure therein." "Then shall ye know if ye follow on to know the Lord." There is no direct manifestation of the Divine character and glory to sense; and the teachings and warnings which nature gives may certainly be missed, and they will be so by those who give up their minds to the slumber of uninquiring indolence, or surrender them to the chaos

of dissipation and undisciplined reverie. But the same class of persons will equally fail of apprehending in their true spirit and fulness, the larger and more explicit revelations of the Divine character and will, given us in Scripture. The knowledge meant by God to bear immediately on moral action, in whatever vehicle it may be borne, is only brought before us, or presented to our acceptance, never forced or 'imposed' upon us. The most astounding and awful scenes and phenomena are made to conspire to impress us with the unspeakable importance of seeking, embracing, and acting on it; nevertheless, still, we are free to embrace or neglect it, under the solemn warning that we neglect it at our peril.

If these reasonings are of force in regard to the theories and assumptions on which they have been specially brought to bear, they will also be found to subvert that recent system which makes man merely the passive recipient of spiritual truth, which is 'imposed'* on him by an impersonal, independent, and sort of divine principle, to which is appropriated the name of 'reason;' and perhaps the special application to this hypothesis of the principles and reasonings brought forward above, might be left to the candid and inquiring reader; but the influence it is gaining in not a few quarters, and the importance begun to be claimed for it, demand that it should receive a more direct consideration. This system has elsewhere been considered under the aspect of its restricting freedom to the mere

* 'Independently of our will, reason intervenes, and certain conditions being accomplished, gives us, or rather imposes on us, those truths.'—COUSIN.

act of willing; here I shall confine myself to what it teaches respecting the nature of reason, and the necessary and absolute character of supersensual truth.

And, first, let us hear his* account of reason: 'Reason,' says he, 'is literally a revelation, a necessary and universal revelation, which is wanting to no man, and which enlightens every man on his coming into the world: *illuminat omnem homenem venientem in hunc mundum.* Reason is the necessary mediator between God and man, the λογος of Pythagoras and Plato, the Word made flesh, which serves as the interpreter of God and the teacher of man, divine and human at the same time. It is not indeed the absolute God in his majestic individuality, but his manifestation in spirit and in truth; it is not the Being of beings, but it is the revealed God of the human race. As God is never wanting to the human race, and never abandons it, so the human race believes in God with an *irresistible* and *unalterable* faith; and this unity of faith is its own highest unity.'† I must restrain the feelings naturally excited in a mind accustomed to sober and rational statement, by the strange and outrageous absurdities of this short paragraph. Nor shall I venture any remark on the taste displayed in the attempt to appropriate the inspired description of the incarnation of the Divine Logos, as the vehicle of this grotesque mysticism. Let us hear another statement: 'Every man believes in his own existence,—every man therefore believes in the existence of the world and of God; every man thinks,—every man therefore thinks God, if we may so express it; every human proposition reflecting the consciousness, reflects the idea of unity

* Cousin. † Exposition of Eclecticism, pp. 79, 80.

and of being, that is essential to consciousness; every human proposition therefore contains God; every man who speaks, speaks of God, and every word is an act of faith and a hymn.'* How easy on this principle is religious worship, and how worthless! Just as good, regarded in this light, because quite as conscious and voluntary, is the chirp of the chicken, or even the midnight song of the mountain rill. Our author proceeds; —'Atheism is a barren formula, a negation without reality, an abstraction of the mind, which cannot assert itself without self-destruction; for every assertion, even though negative, is a judgment which contains the idea of being, and, consequently, God in his fulness.' I assert, that I write with a pen;—this is not merely a negative, but a positive assertion; in making this assertion I have the idea of a pen, and in that simple idea alone I have the idea of being, 'for every assertion contains the idea of being.' But what idea of God can be involved in the simple and single idea of a pen. I grant I may arrive at the notion of God, by tracing its history, inquiring into its origin, and studying its relations and adaptations, but these involve many and various ideas; and besides, my obtaining these ideas depends on my own will: I may make the inquiries, I may give the attention, I may exercise the thought necessary in order to obtain these, or not, as I please; if I do not, the idea of a pen will not suggest, far less involve the idea of God. Again, 'Reason is impersonal. Whence then comes this wonderful guest? What is the principle of this reason which enlightens us without belonging to us? This principle is no other than God.'†

* Exposition of Eclecticism, p. 78. † Ibid. p. 92, Note.

A direct result of this deification of universal reason, and one indeed distinctly recognised by this philosopher, is the divine origin of all the forms of religion and idolatry now extant or which have ever existed on earth. 'Reason is thus clothed in its own eyes with divine authority on account of the principle on which it rests. Now this state of reason which listens to and regards itself as the echo of God on earth, with the peculiar and extraordinary characteristics which then distinguish it, is what we call enthusiasm. The word is a sufficient explanation of the thing. Enthusiasm is the breath of God within us; it is immediate intuition opposed to induction and demonstration; it is primitive spontaneity opposed to the ulterior development of reflection; it is the perception of the loftiest truths by reason, when it is most independent of the senses and of our personality..... It is enthusiasm which gives birth to religions; for every religion supposes two things, namely—that the truths it proclaims are absolute truths, and that it proclaims them in the name of God himself, by whom they are revealed,'* Islamism and Hinduism, Buddhism and Soofeeism are all religions as well as Christianity; consequently they have had their birth alike from this Divine enthusiasm; consequently they are all sustained by the same authority, embody the same absolute truths, revealed by the same God: yet in one he declares that "the Lord our God is one Lord; and there is none other but he." This surely is an absolute truth, and corresponding to it there is given in the same religion a command equally unqualified: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him *only* shalt thou serve;"

* Exposition of Eclecticism, pp. 92, 93, Notes.

while another 'great religion' presents to its adherents the enormous number of 330 millions of deities demanding worship. In the one he has declared that he will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images; while in the other, these very things are done which he declares from his own mouth he will not do. Nor is this all: Christianity pronounces all the religions of the Gentiles false, and charges those who hold them with having "changed the truth of God into a lie;" and its founder enjoined his disciples to "go into all the world and preach it to every creature," declaring that "he that believed should be saved, and he that believed not should be damned." How were they to do to whom it was thus proclaimed with such awful sanctions, who had already embraced a religion sustained by equal authority, equally divine? What were to be their thoughts between the two? Is there another religion besides that of Christ based on the conviction, that men are sinners, which proclaims any other expiation as adequate to the removal of guilt than the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross, or admits of any other mediator between God and men but him? If Christianity is true, such a religion must be false. For the Christian Scriptures declare that "there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus," and that "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." Such a religion, as every one at all acquainted with it knows, is Hinduism: among other things which it holds forth as sufficient for the expiation of guilt and purification from sin, are —laceration and torture of the flesh, and bathing in the 'sacred waters;' yet, on the principle of Cousin, both are equally divine. Was ever a system pro-

pounded involving more palpable contradictions? Indeed its author himself seems to have felt considerable uneasiness in contemplating it as open to this charge: and when he looked abroad on the spectacle, grotesque and strange, of antagonist and repugnant systems of faith which have gained possession of the human soul, it was impossible for him to suppress some audible misgivings. 'If these convictions of faith be combined in every act of consciousness, and if consciousness be one in the whole human race,' he asks, and well he may, 'whence arises the prodigious diversity which seems to exist between man and man? in what does that diversity consist? In truth, when we appear to perceive at first view so many differences [mark how cautious and fearful of a fatal admission] between one individual and another, one country and another, one epoch of humanity and another, we feel a profound emotion of melancholy; and are tempted to regard an intellectual development so capricious, and even the whole of humanity, as a phenomenon without consistency, without grandeur, and without interest.' Something akin to this indeed, one would think, would be the spontaneous voice of correct and enlightened religious feeling. Not so, however, our author; he deems this but a superficial and deceptious view of the matter. 'But it is demonstrated by a more attentive observation of facts, that no man is a stranger to either of the three great ideas that constitute consciousness.' We were not aware that any particular *ideas* constituted consciousness; we thought *that* was an element of all ideas in rational mind: but let us hear what these ideas are,—'personality or the liberty of man, impersonality or the necessity of nature, and the providence of God.' If the liberty of man be an

element of consciousness, sure enough many a philosopher has been as unconscious as a lobster; for many a one has utterly denied it: and quite as unfortunate have been many more as to the necessity of nature,—myriads in their unconscious ignorance regarding it as originated by the spontaneous energy, sustained by the free will, and directed and regulated by the intelligent providence of God; but what room there can be for this 'providence' under 'a necessary system of nature,' is far more than we able to divine. But to return to our author: 'Every man,' says he, 'comprehends these three ideas immediately, because he found them at first, and constantly finds them again within himself.' Again, in another place: 'The very idea of *being* implies, in its lowest degree, an idea (more or less clear, yet real) of *being* itself, that is of God. To think, is to know that we think; it is to confide in our thought, that is to confide in the principle of thought, that is to believe in the existence of that principle. As this does not imply that we believe ourselves' [as if the belief of our existence required something for its ground surer than consciousness, and consciousness was not to be trusted merely in itself] 'or that we believe the world;' [as if we were not to trust our senses for the existence of what we perceive by them,—if this is not the old scepticism in both its great phases,—if Cousin has slain it, surely this is its ghost!] 'and yet implies,' he continues, 'that we believe; it is evident, that whether we know it or do not know it, it implies, that we believe in the absolute principle of thought;' [but what can be the nature of a belief that we know not of, or are not conscious of? and how can such a belief be a constituent of consciousness;] 'so that all thought implies a spontaneous faith in God, and natural athe-

ism is impossible.' Admitting that this were true, what would be the value of an unconscious theism? it could have no influence on rational or moral action. Both these proceed from choice, consequently imply conscious knowledge of the objects among which choice is exercised, and of the grounds or motives which induce it. This unconscious faith has peculiar charms for Cousin; the reason is obvious,—the great majority of mankind have no desire for a better. But he assigns a different one, strange enough, and like many others of his, not very intelligible. The unreasoning masses, these unconscious believers 'alone have true existence,' that is, if the language has any meaning, they alone are the possessors of humanity in its original purity and integrity. 'If ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.' 'Leave out the exceptions which appear from time to time in certain critical periods of history, and you will perceive that the masses, which alone have true existence, always live in the same faith, of which the forms only vary.' 'A lie is but the truth in masquerade,' says Lord Byron. What the unprincipled poet exclaimed in the spirit of profane banter and sceptical scorn, Cousin virtually (would I not be justified in saying explicitly) affirms, with a solemn air, in a treatise professing to embody the only true philosophy of human nature.

'But the masses do not possess the secret of their convictions;' they and the sceptical philosophers it appears then are in the same situation; 'when the scholar has denied the existence of God, hear the man, ask *him*, [he is equally unconscious if the masses represent him in his true condition] 'take him at unawares, and you will see that his words imply the idea of a God; and that faith in God, is without his know-

ledge, at the bottom of his heart.' Thus, then, the atheist and the masses are, on these principles, in the same condition, and practically the results attest that this is but too near the truth. Nor has true philosophy far to search in order to account for this. For supposing the thing possible,—a belief which is unknown to its possessor, is one which he must be unable to distinguish from any thing else. Things are distinguished by their differences, but a thing which is unknown to us cannot be discerned as differing from any other thing; for before it could be so, it must be discerned what it is in itself. A belief, then, unknown to its possessor cannot be any standard of truth; it cannot be any guard against error; it cannot be any guide to us, as to what we are to receive or what we are to reject; for being unknown we cannot perceive what other articles of belief are compatible, or what are incompatible with it. So in the history of mankind we see interminable variations and fallings-off from the true belief. One sceptic has denied the existence of the world, another has disallowed Providence, another the existence of God himself; the masses have robbed him of his unity, his purity, his glory, and his worship, and have agreed in nothing further than the recognition and dread of some sort of invisible power, which they have conceived of as manifested under every form of absurdity, and subsisting in connexion with every phase of wickedness. Here the reader will observe we have to do with these melancholy facts *as* facts,—an inquiry into their causes belongs to another part of this treatise.

We must now briefly advert to some other truths which Cousin affirms reason alone can reveal, and to the characteristics which in his view distinguish them from all other truth. 'Let it be remembered that the

truths which reason intuitively discovers, are not arbitrary, but necessary, that they are not relative but absolute.'* 'It is to reason that we owe the knowledge of universal and necessary truths, of principles which we all obey, and which we cannot but obey.'† What then are these necessary and universal truths? We have a complete list of them, he says, in the categories of Aristotle; but he conceives these may be reduced in number, and ultimately arrives at the conclusion that 'the laws of thought may be reduced to two, namely—the law of causality, and that of substance.' Elsewhere, however, he classes other notions with them as possessing the same characteristics, and as derived solely from the same source. Thus, 'among the notions which reason furnishes, there are some, the characteristics of which are irreconcileable with those of the sensible phenomena: for example—the notions of cause, of substance, of time, of space, of unity, and the like. Let sensation be tortured as much as you please, you will never draw from it the characteristics of universality and necessity, by which these notions and many others are incontestibly distinguished.'‡ Let us examine the claims of some of these notions to the character of universality and necessity; and first as to the notion of causation. Do we regard it as a necessary condition of every thing that exists that it must have a cause: this would be necessary to the universality of the notion, for 'if it be universal and necessary, to limit it would be to destroy it.' Is it then unlimited? If so, though we should arrive at the knowledge of some thing or of some being which is the cause of all other being, this

* Exposition of Eclecticism, p. 92, Notes. † Ibid. p. 60.
‡ Ibid. p. 56.

necessary and universal principle of causality demands a cause for it; and supposing that found, a cause for that again, inevitably issuing in the atheistic absurdity of an eternal chain of causation. But if we are to avoid this absurdity we must limit the principle of causality, and acknowledge an order of existence exempt from the law of causation: accordingly when we set ourselves to inquire how wide the range is of the principle of causality, we find that it is not every thing that *exists* which must have a cause, but whatever begins to exist. It is only where we perceive marks of an origin or of change that we ascribe existence to a cause. Where we find an existence that is unbeginning and unchanged, there we recognise necessary or uncaused existence. The notion of causality, then, is not universal, for there is an order of existence in which it is not at all involved; and it is not absolute, for it depends on the notion of limited and variable existence. Moreover, it is not intuitive, for its limits are not to be correctly ascertained but by a process of abstract thought.

Then as to the notion of substance being an intuitive and necessary revelation of reason,—if it is so, the writer of these pages is certainly an irrational animal, for though he has expended no little thought on the matter, he has to confess that as yet he has failed to obtain any distinct notion of what in the philosophy of Cousin is even meant by substance. Vulgar notions of substance are derived directly from the sense of touch and of seeing, and most men will allow that they feel some difficulty in conceiving of a thing as substance which is both impalpable and invisible. As to the notion of substance being 'incontestibly distinguished by universality and necessity,' I would ask

whether many a one has not had a distinct notion of substance who never dreamt of any existing beyond the boundary of his native hills; and if it is replied that this is not a notion of what is properly substance at all,—the reply itself is fatal to the theory, for the persons in question have had no other; and if many of the human race have had no other, how can this notion of substance contended for, be an intuitive principle of universal reason.

Further, that the notion of time is an absolute and necessary one, I deny; time has but a 'relative' existence, it exists in relation to succession,—absolute eternity knows no succession: like absolute infinity it is not divisible into parts. The notion of time then, so far from being absolute and necessary, implies the previous notion of successive and limited existence. Thus, not only is time measured by succession, but without the consciousness of succession we could have no such notion as that expressed by time or duration.

And as to unity, surely no superhuman power is necessary to give one a notion of that, seeing it may be most distinctly obtained without sending one's thoughts beyond one's own self; for what more impressive notion of unity shall we obtain anywhere than what is furnished by the wonderful mechanism of our own bodies, all harmonizing, and all subserving, without let or jar, the purposes of an animating and directive mind.*

Among all these categories, that of space perhaps has the greatest appearance of claim to an absolute character; yet does not the notion of space depend on the notion of body or substance? Is it not the notion of that in which body subsists, or that which intervenes

* See Note E.

between bodies? If any one doubts this, let him endeavour to form a notion of space without body or matter. Let him send forth his thoughts beyond the farthest star and the remotest planet of creation, beyond the utmost range of the power of gravitation, beyond where the last ray of light expires, and tell us what notion of space he can form there, and whether it any way resembles what he has been used to entertain amid life and light and tangible forms. With these simple remarks then we shall leave the reader to judge, whether the notions in question 'are incontestibly distinguished by the characteristics of universality and necessity.' That some of them directly, and all of them ultimately, conduct us to something higher than the sensible phenomena, we are ready, not only to acknowledge, but to maintain: but what has that to do either with their necessity or their universality?

There is another principle propounded by Cousin which demands a brief notice, inasmuch as were it established it would preclude the possibility of any thing of a moral nature in the Divine character, —namely, his notion of creation. 'God, if he is a cause, can create; and if he is an absolute cause, he cannot but create; and in creating the universe, he does not draw it forth from nothingness, but from himself.....An absolute creative force, which cannot but pass into act, being eminently his characteristic, it follows, not that creation is possible, but that it is necessary. It follows that God is creating without cessation and infinitely, and that creation is inexhaustible, and sustains itself constantly.'* If creation is

* Exposition of Eclecticism, p. 131, Notes.

necessary,—if God cannot but create,—if incessantly and infinitely he is producing from himself by necessity of nature, what is he but an infinitude of physical causation? He is not an independent being acting by choice and will; the universe is as necessary to him as he is to it. Accordingly we find our author declaring that 'A God without a world is no less false than a world without a God; a cause without effects which manifest it; or an indefinite series of effects without a primary cause,' in these extremes, he says, there 'are equal error and equal danger.' A cause that cannot be without effects, is not a voluntary cause, for in a voluntary agent acting voluntarily, causation originates in the will,—effects are or are not according as it wills them to be or not. If God cannot but create incessantly and infinitely, his will has nothing to do with creation, for all exercise of will or choice is precluded in what a being must of necessity do, and as effectually will the exercise of intelligence be precluded too; for what relation can intelligence have to action, unless it be in supplying the grounds of choice; but the perception of grounds of choice, where choice is precluded, would be but a mockery. But it may be meant, that though God cannot but create, he is free to choose what or how much; but if God was free to choose what he would create, he must in regard to every particular thing or being, have been free to choose whether he would create it or not. For in the very admission, that he was free to choose, whether what he was to create was to be of this kind or of that, it is involved not only that the thing existed not, but that its existence was not necessary; for if its existence were necessary, its nature and qualities must be determinate: for to say the existence of a thing is ne-

cessary, and yet that in that necessity is not involved any determinate nature or qualities of the thing respecting which this necessity is predicated, is an absurdity; for what is it which individualizes a thing, or distinguishes it from other things, if it is not its nature and qualities. But a thing which has no particular nature or qualities is nothing; for so far from necessity being predicable of such existence, apart from individualizing characteristics, nothing can even be imagined. But physical or necessary causation is not creation: creation is the production of what before was not by voluntary power, acting not by necessity, but according to choice or will. If the universe were necessary, it were an absurdity to call it creation. In that case, it must either exist eternally and independently, or it must be a portion of God; or rather—which indeed seems to be the notion of Cousin—the development of the Divine substance. 'God is,' according to his idea, 'at once substance and cause,—always substance, and always cause, ... one and many, eternity and time, space and number, ... infinite and finite together, ... at the same time God, nature, and humanity.'* 'The creations of God are from himself; therefore he creates with all the characteristics which we have recognised in himself, and which pass necessarily into his creations.'† If God is nature and humanity, what follows but that each of these is so much of God. If he creates with all the characteristics which belong to himself, passing necessarily into his creations, what are these other than portions of himself? rather, we should say, is it not a most grievous solecism to speak in this case of creations.

* Exposition of Eclecticism, p. 77. † Ibid. p. 131, Notes.

This system recognises nothing like Divine will; it merges that in the necessity of the Divine nature. Now we readily acknowledge that the Divine will is not to be represented as distinct from the Divine nature, but for a very different reason; it is because we regard the Divine nature as just the aggregate of all the spontaneous emotions and acts of the Divine mind, —spontaneous, because that mind is the original and only absolute, anterior to, or beneath which there is no necessity in regard to any thing creatable,—and certain, or unchangeable, because that mind is all-knowing and supreme. According to this view, then, instead of its being true that 'God cannot but create,' or that all his creations are by necessity of nature, we shall come to the conclusion that every act of creation is the result of free intelligent purpose, and unnecessitated will. It may be said, that to make creation or any part of it contingent, or such as might not have been, is incompatible with the unchangeableness of God; for if, for instance, you suppose this world not to have been created, God could not have had the innumerable thoughts and purposes which have been in his mind respecting its creation, sustentation, and government, without having changed, on the supposition of its not being made; for if he had purposed to create it, and it not yet have been created, it is clear he must have changed. And if he had never had the intention of purpose to create it, and consequently none of the thoughts involved in that purpose, he would not have been exactly of the same mind as he is, seeing it has been created. But, in answer to this, let it be observed, that the not having this purpose and the thoughts involved in it, would not make God changeable: this would not be the case unless God had

formed such a purpose and afterwards altered it. For as God's having created the world, is seen by all to have been perfectly compatible with his unchangeableness, seeing there is no intimation nor proof of his having ever had any other purpose but to create it; so though he had not created this world, would his unchangeableness have appeared less indubitable to the rational inhabitants of other worlds, if there had been no indication of God's ever having had any intention of creating it? Unless we hold that creation is absolutely infinite, which I conceive would be a contradiction, as no possible aggregation of finite things, however vast their number, can make up an infinite; unless then we assume what is contradictory, we must admit that there are possible worlds which God has not created; consequently there are many possible purposes to create which God has not seen meet to form, and had our world not been created it would have been among these possible, but not actually existing worlds, and its non-existence would as little have shown any liability to change in God as their's. It is possible, however, that it may be farther objected Though this may be compatible with the unchangeness of God, how can it consist with the infinity of his nature? If there are possible purposes which God has not purposed, is it not evident that the Divine mind cannot be infinite, seeing we can conceive of something which is not in it? But what has an infinity of nature to do with infinity of purpose? every thing created is a finite thing, and the purpose to create must correspond with the object to be created: a purpose is a certain definite act or state of mind which we can readily conceive of as eternal, but which has no conceivable relation to infinity; consequently, if the

principle above referred to be correct, that no number of finite things, however great, can constitute infinity, it is obvious that infinity is not predicable of purposes —it is irrelevant to their nature. Moreover, if the absence of some possible purposes were not compatible with whatever constitutes the true infinity of the Divine nature, this infinity would be incompatible with the freedom of the Divine will; for if this infinity required the Divine mind to entertain all possible purposes, and consequently, unless it were to change, to execute them, there would be no room for choice: for there is no choice if one must do all that is possible,—choice is exercised in selecting from among possible things what is best; and we should be landed again in the necessity of creation, and the annihilation of the Divine will. But further, God could not have all possible purposes, without all the volitions of all beings being his, consequently, not without his being the real doer of whatever they do; consequently, not without being not only the author, but the actual doer of whatever is called sin, which, however, in that case, could be no such thing; therefore, not without making moral law the most intolerable mockery, and whatever is called retribution,—a malignant absurdity confounding all conception;—if there is any willing to hold such principles concerning the infinity of the Divine nature, with all these inevitable consequences, I leave it to the reader to say whether he is not worse than an atheist.

This error seems to originate in confounding unchangeableness with necessity. What is the difference? Unchangeableness merely implies that it never *was* otherwise; necessity, that it never *could*

be otherwise. Unchangeableness is perfectly compatible with freedom of choice, provided the purpose resulting from such choice continue unaltered; but necessity by its very nature precludes choice altogether, for choice can be no element of an action which is necessary, and a purpose which is necessary is no purpose but a physical state.*

* See Note F.

PART II.

MAN CONSIDERED AS A MORAL AGENT.

SECTION I.

INQUIRY RESPECTING THE MORAL CONSTITUTION AND STATE OF MAN.

Consistently with the conditions above stated, moral agency admits of a wide variety of constitution and circumstances in those who are capable of it. They may be unembodied spirits, or invested with various orders of corporeity. They may differ vastly in the strength and range of their intellectual and active powers. They may be instigated by propensions and emotions, greatly varying both in nature and character. Each individual may owe his existence to a distinct act of creation, as is the case with those beings revealed to us in Scripture under the name of angels: or a whole race may derive it, through the medium of predecessors, from an original stock, as is the case with man. They may be created with the powers necessary to moral agency in a state fit for immediate exercise, as was the case with the first human pair; or these may be progressively developed from a mere rudiment, evincing scarcely any thing more than the

characteristics of animal existence, as in all the other members of the human family.

Human nature may be conceived of as subsisting in three moral states. First, in a state of trial, the heart drawn by outward and emotive incitements towards evil, but with the moral sense so prompt and keen as to supply sufficient motive to resist and repel them. Indifference towards the objects of moral conduct is not necessary to moral agency; for that could not subsist but in a mental habitude entirely devoid of emotion. Pleasure or gratification of whatever kind necessarily involves complacency towards the object producing it, and pain displacency; and there are no emotions or propensions which do not involve one or other of these. A mind indifferent to the objects of moral action, must be an emotionless mind, and such a mind we have already proved would be incapable of moral agency. Secondly, human nature may subsist in a state in which the heart being inclined toward evil, evil is frequently chosen and pursued, yet with the power of choosing and pursuing good,—evinced by the feeling of regret, which can only be experienced when we are conscious of doing wrong when we might have avoided it,—by mutual blame,—and by evils indulged in at one time, being refrained from at another. Thirdly, by long fidelity and the practice of virtue under trial, we can conceive of a habitude of mind being acquired, in which good will be chosen and pursued with something like the ease and certitude of instinct.

In which of these states human nature at present subsists, it is not difficult to determine; the most palpable and melancholy facts show its moral disorder. Men feel regret for many things which they do, which

shows that they are conscious of doing wrong individually. Men blame one another, which shows either that they *do* wrong or *judge* wrong: either that moral law is violated, or the moral sense perverted; either of which is incompatible with an underanged state of moral being. Let us only be aware that men quarrel with each other, and this single fact alone is sufficient to prove that human nature is in a state of moral disorder; for were it in a right moral state, men would form the same judgments and pursue the same conduct in regard to all the great points of moral law; and if in regard to any minor and obscurer matters they might ever differ in opinion, humility, candour, and love would prevent them from quarrelling.

The question now arises, how is it that human nature is in such a state? Was such its original condition, or has it suffered any derangement? Many things forbid our concluding that human nature is now in its original condition. It is not consonant to our notions of the moral character of God to think that man is morally in the state to which he was assigned, and for which his powers were adapted by his Maker. Then the state of anarchy in which the recognised powers of the same moral being subsist, equally forbid such a conclusion. It is the dictate of universal reason, that all the powers and propensions of our nature, should be regulated by that sense of right and wrong with which God has endowed us, in every case in which a right and wrong are cognizable by this sense; but how far this is from being the case, the diversity which subsists between the moral conduct of any community, and the moral judgments of its more thoughtful and virtuous members, sufficiently evinces; and not less the disparity between the dictates of that sense

even in the minds of the vicious, in moments of reflection, and the gross excesses in which they indulge. If then we may not conclude that man's moral being came at first in this state from the hands of his Maker, various deeply interesting questions arise in our minds —When, and how did a derangement take place? How came it to prevail universally? Man being a creature under a generative constitution, is this derangement in any respect a transmitted thing? and if it is, in what respect, and to what extent? If this derangement is original or constitutional, is it under the power of personal agency so as that it can thereby be either increased, or diminished and repaired? These are questions, some solution of which is indispensable to any distinct conceptions of the moral constitution and moral state of man. Man, as distinguished from beings, each of which owes his existence to a distinct independent act of creation, has a generative constitution,—a constitution by which each individual subsequent to those of the original creation, takes its origin from parents,—an origin wholly rudimentary, and under which each order, and within each order every species is limited and defined by characteristics which permanently distinguish it from every other. This appears to be the order of all propagated organic being, be it vegetable, animal, or rational. Respecting the substance of mind, we are entirely ignorant; but in human nature we have strong grounds for thinking that mind has a rudimentary origin, analogous to that of body; for be that substance what it may, we are certain that greatness or high development of mind, consists in reach of knowledge, power of action and endurance, and self-control; none of which can be acquired without long and strenuous exercise

and effort. Whatever be their substratum, intellectual and moral being in man present themselves to our view in a mere rudiment at first. Viewing then this being in its rudiment, or as soon as it is capable of moral action, gives it indication of any tendency towards good or towards evil? Does it manifest what I may call a taste for moral law, and a spirit of inquiry respecting it, with a prevalent will to act in conformity to it; or is it characterized by a tendency to act on impulse and propension regardless of such law? Or, if indifferent to it, previously to its being brought before it, does it when such is the case, show a promptitude in acting agreeably to its dictates? Does it show a regard for the author of its being by inquiry respecting his character, with a readiness to entertain high notions respecting him, and desire and effort to act agreeably to his will, so far as it is or can be known; or does it manifest unconcern respecting him, conjoined with a tendency to entertain inadequate and debasing notions of his nature and character, and to yield to other beings the homage and obedience due to him alone? Impartial observation and general history bring out an answer to these inquiries consonant to the declaration of an ancient and revered book; that men do "not like to retain God in their knowledge," and even according to what knowledge they may have of him, are not careful to "glorify him as God." But man is an imitative being, especially when young; and much of the evil tendency appearing in the early stage of his life, may be accounted for from the evil example, and defective or erroneous training of his guardians and seniors. Doubtless, this is true; but will this alone account for the tendency in question? There is a ready test for any such theory.

Where children are partly under good and partly under evil influences, which are they most apt in general to yield to? It is possible enough to adopt a standard of moral action so low, as will greatly abate our estimate of the aberration of human feeling and conduct from the rule of right. But on the principle—surely a just one—of supreme regard being had to him who is supreme—him who is the Author of our being, and the Benefactor from whose hand we receive all that we enjoy, this estimate cannot be other than appalling. Such a principle recognised will not permit us to hesitate about the right answer to the question, whether there is a greater aptitude in the young to yield to good influences or to evil. We mean not by any means that there is in all men a proneness to commit every form of sin, so soon as occasion and opportunity present themselves; such a view of the moral state of human nature would be utterly inconsistent with obvious fact. But that there is a permanent derangement in human nature, which, if we rightly apprehend it, is this,—a predominance of the sensual over the spiritual; the latter, in constant risk of being smothered as it were by the former, an evil, the primary and most melancholy manifestation of which is neglect and forgetfulness of God, with the concomitant tendency to act on motives of sense and immediate circumstances, instead of on those of a remote and supersensual kind. This much obviously is predicable of man universally. Tendencies to particular sins, whether personal or against society, may arise from special influences, or be derived from immediate progenitors, but this unquestionably pervades the whole race.

This specific derangement of our nature has manifested itself strikingly and most mournfully, in the

perpetual proneness of mankind to sensualize the objects of moral and spiritual regard. Thus we find that the adoration of sensible objects soon became so universal that one people could scarcely be preserved from it by special divine provisions; and we may see in the image-worship of the Romish Church, and in the character of the Mohammedan Paradise, striking illustrations of the same universal tendency.

But what is the amount or force of this tendency? It cannot be such as to necessitate sin, for sin necessitated would cease to be sin; no being could be charged with guilt in doing what he could not of necessity but do. This tendency, inasmuch as it inheres in our nature, is physical, as contradistinguished from moral, strictly so called; yet it is controlable by the will, stimulated by moral motives, for were it not so, it would not be only a tendency, it would be a law; and so far as it is thus controlable, and so soon as it becomes so, it comes to be of a moral nature. The range of moral law is no wider than the possession of a self-regulating or self-controling power: nothing is morally good but what results from the exercise of this power; nothing immoral or evil but what results from its abuse or neglect; consequently, not only are beings who want this power incapable of guilt, but also in beings who are capable of it, guilt is not predicable of any state of feeling which may subsist, or of any action that may be performed, previously to its development, or during seasons when it may be suspended. No one regards insane persons as responsible; nor can the somnambulist be called to account for his actions, nor he who talks in his sleep, for his words, or the thoughts and feelings they express. As little, we conceive, can infants be charged with sin for

any dispositions or feelings they may have, which may be conceived at variance with moral law, so long as they are incapable of knowing it, and are without the power of self-control, which is a *sine quâ non* in all who are the subjects of it. But while the tendency we are speaking of, cannot be charged as guilt in the unconscious stages and states of our being, it is involved in the principles just stated, that it immediately becomes so, when allowed to prevail, after we become possessed of the knowledge of the law to which it is inimical, and acquire the power of self-control by which it is to be regulated.

Of the substance, or substantial essence, of mind we know nothing at all, but from the very nature of moral agency we can clearly perceive that it cannot have any inherent moral impurity independent of, and apart from, thought, feeling, and volition; for there are no other conceivable modes of mental action. And if not mental action only, but conscious voluntary action, is involved in the very idea of moral agency, whatever belongs to the mind anterior to, or independent of, thought, feeling, and volition—is as clearly physical as the bones and sinews of our bodily frame; and for any such state of mind, if there were any such that might be so named, we should be as little accountable as for the length of our limbs or the complexion of our skin. In the present state of human nature, the mind can act only in and by the body which it animates; and being so embodied and limited, is from the very dawning of its faculties in a state of constant contact and converse with the material world, and being furnished with all the susceptibilities requisite for, and proper to, an intimate connection with, dependence on, and control over, the objects around it, it must ever be

open to direct impressions from these. The world of sense is thus that which first presents itself to man, and with which he is first capable of being acquainted; and were he *always* incapable of knowing anything else, or were his situation such as to shut him up to impressions of sense, and the thoughts which they occasion, he certainly could not be blamed for not thinking of anything besides, or for not acting on other motives, when placed in a condition in which none other could operate. Nor could he in such a case contract any moral stain by invariably acting according to such impressions and stimulants, for he would only be acting in a manner consonant to his capabilities and condition, seeing he had no scope for choosing, whether he would yield to these, or act on motives of a higher order. The essence of a state of moral pollution is a disposition to choose, and an indulging with delight in, what is known to be wrong; but it could not be moral pollution unless these indulgences or pleasures were within the range of choice, and perceived to be under the regulation of moral law; for the mind and conscience cannot be defiled but by indulging in, or choosing, what is believed or known to be wrong. But this incapacity of moral perception and choice is characteristic only of the first stage of our being, to which alone, consequently, these remarks are applicable: man, as soon as the powers of rational and voluntary action are developed, is, as we hope to be able to show in a subsequent section, furnished with the means of acquiring spiritual knowledge, and subsists under an economy teeming with events which strongly prompt to moral reflection and action; and he is guilty because he prefers yielding to the appetites and the impressions of sense, to attending to, and act-

ing on, moral and spiritual monitions: and the derangement of his nature is manifested in this, that while he is facile in yielding to external impressions and the cravings of appetite, he shews an inaptness and aversion to admit and retain spiritual impressions, and withstands the influence of motives drawn from super-sensual and eternal verities.

But this propension of which we are speaking can have no practical operation, or can induce no action of a moral nature previous to a knowledge of right, or of the distinction between right and wrong. There can be nothing moral or immoral where there is no power of choice, and in order to the power of choice there must be the perception of distinction, and in order to the power of moral choice the perception of moral distinctions—of the distinction between right and wrong. But the knowledge that a thing is right, obligatory, or such as we *ought to do*, involves in it a sense of power, or the perception that it is something *that we can do*. The sense of obligation and the perception of impossibility are intuitively contradictory; it is impossible they can subsist together. But not only is there always a general sense of right and wrong developed previous to the guilty operativeness of any propension to evil; in every individual case there must be the power of knowing the law which restrains and regulates any propension, before there can be guilt in not restraining or regulating it; for a law utterly hid and unknowable is for all practical purposes (and the only purpose of moral law is practical) the same as none: and where there is no conscious violation of law, and where ignorance is owing to the voluntary neglect of no duty, there can be no guilt. So clear is it then that man has power to regulate and restrain the ten-

dency or propension which is in his nature to evil, that without this power any tendency in his nature could not be a tendency to *moral* evil, and never could induce that, seeing voluntary power is involved in the very idea of anything being moral.

In addition to the evils of constitutional propension, the mode and the relative position in which man's rational and moral powers are developed, involve in the present state of human nature peculiar disadvantages and difficulties. Human beings apart from the propensions they may derive from, or through, their parents, depend so much on them in early life for their notions of right and wrong,—for the depth of their impressions regarding moral evil,—for the habits they form, and as to whether the power of self-government be cultivated, or appetite and passion allowed to obtain sway,—each individual and each generation is connected so with that which preceded it, influenced in its character so much, not only by derived tendency, but by example and direct moulding influence, that when once human nature is radically deranged, difficulties almost insurmountable present themselves in the way of its restoration.

But when or how did the moral disposition of man suffer this derangement? Here philosophy utterly fails us, and we anxiously ask, Is there any document existing which can throw light on questions so important; or have any traditions reached us of a more happy constitution and condition having ever been enjoyed? From whatever source derived, traditions have been current among all nations of a 'golden age' of innocence and felicity, as the pristine condition of man. But we have yet a surer guide, in a book which is proved beyond reasonable doubt, to be not only au-

thentic, but divine; we have the account of the origin of the human race, of the state in which man was created, of the moral trial to which he was subjected, of how he transgressed the law under which he was placed, and that the result was that melancholy condition of human nature which we have been contemplating.

SECTION II.

OF THE ORIGINAL CONDITION AND POWERS OF MAN CONSIDERED AS A MORAL AGENT.

HAVING pursued as far as reason could conduct us, our investigation respecting the derangement of the powers of moral action in man, apparent in his present character and condition, we are now to inquire what is taught us in Scripture on this momentous question. But in order to obtain the more distinct an issue, it will be well in the first place to ascertain whether it throws any light on our original moral constitution; for as every quality necessarily implies the possibility of an opposite, if that constitution promised anything pre-eminently happy as the result of acting in conformity to moral law, it will abate the difficulty of accounting for the peculiar evils which have been involved in its violation.

The sacred historian informs us that when God created man he "created him in his own image," which I take to mean, that in addition to the animal constitution which he received in common with all other sen-

tient beings, he was endowed with the power of comprehending truth, and made susceptible of mental enjoyment; but especially in that he was constituted with the power of acting from choice, regulated by an intelligent sense of right and wrong. A being insusceptible of all emotion and devoid of all propension, we have found would be incapable of moral agency. But man was intended for a moral agent, and consequently received a soul susceptible of all the emotions proper to his situation and his duties: moreover, this soul being made the animating principle of a complicated corporeal organization, and constituted to derive nourishment and enjoyment from external objects, appetites and passions became necessary to it, corresponding to its wants and susceptibilities. This animal nature being sustained in life and vigour by chemical agencies and processes far too various and subtile for immediate comprehension, man was relieved of all the care of directing and guarding so complicated and delicate a mechanism, except attending to the intimations of a few determinate impulses. In order that these impulses might not fail of their object, it was necessary that their appropriate actions should be attended with enjoyment: such appears to be the law of all organized sentient being. But man's nature having a higher end than mere animal existence and enjoyment, the gratification of these appetites was not to be his sole nor chief object, they were therefore placed under the control of reason and the moral sense; the moral powers of human nature were to be developed, and the moral nerves, if I may so speak, strung, by keeping these in subjection. That some such exercise was necessary for these momentous purposes is evident from the very nature of moral agency; for where there is nothing to

regulate nor resist, there is no room for choice, and consequently there can be no moral action.

All moral action implies law or rule; all law a promulgating and sanctioning authority. Man as a moral agent was placed immediately under the authority of God, but this authority could not be shown but by some command; without something enjoined or forbidden, there would have been no test of man's regard for such a being or his authority either. Accordingly, the sacred historian relates, that God having created man, male and female, in his own image, and placed them in Eden, a garden furnished with all things necessary to their subsistence and comfort, and promising a constant supply of these, provided they bestowed on it the necessary care and labour; gave them permission to use whatever their tastes approved as food, with the exception of the fruit of one tree, in regard to which he delivered this law, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Such a law being made the test of regard to God, and submission to his authority, has furnished a copious source of gibes and derision to unbelievers—a circumstance which as much as any other connected with the opposition of sceptics to revelation, shows that such opposition is any thing but the result of a calm and profound exercise of reason. For not only may such a moral test be vindicated from the charge of everything mean and ridiculous, but it may, we are confident, be shown to be eminently appropriate; regard being had to the constitution and circumstances of the primitive pair. Various considerations lead us to think that an object indifferent and even insignificant apart, from any Divine command respecting it, formed the

most proper test of obedience for a being so constituted and circumstanced as Adam. The conduct in regard to such an object, would be regulated by regard to God alone;—being an inanimate object, this conduct would not be influenced by any of the sympathies called forth by living natures; had the inhibition respected anything unbecoming or cruel towards other sentient creatures, a rightly constituted mind, which we are certain Adam's then was, would naturally have revolted from any such act. Moreover such a test was calculated to call into exercise the principle of faith, as well as keep alive a constant sense of the sovereign though inscrutable wisdom and authority of God. 'Why threaten death if I eat of the fruit of this tree? God is all-wise, myself "fearfully and wonderfully made;" and this wondrous world in which I am placed clearly shows this. God has created me and constantly sustains me, therefore he has a clear right to give any injunction which it is in my power to observe.' And this test was not merely a check on what in Scripture language are appropriately called "the desires of the flesh," but also on "the desires of the mind;" for the designation given to the inhibited tree intimated some mysterious knowledge-giving property connected with the use of its fruit; and the human mind would understand all mysteries. But man was thus taught that there are cases in which he must hold his curiosity in abeyance, and that he must submit to obtain knowledge in such modes and measures, as God may see meet to allow and sanction. But why assign any test beyond that moral code which regulates the conduct of all men through all ages and all times? A little reflection will show that much of this code was inapplicable to man in the situation he

then occupied. Was it any of the commands of the table which regulates his conduct towards his fellows, which should have been made the moral test? He then had no fellows; the only relation he sustained was one in which the impulses of his nature anticipated all law. Should it have been any part of the table, which inhibits whatever is derogatory to the reverence and worship due to God? The details of this table, Adam was removed far from any temptation to violate; but the law to which we are adverting, embodied the spirit of the whole, and that apart too from everything extraneous. It brought the soul directly into contact with Divine authority; and while no reason was assigned for such a particular object being made the test of man's regard for this authority, its reasonableness must have been apparent of whatever sort the object might have been, when the law respecting it, emanated from God, and was such as man had power to obey.

As a moral agent, Adam did not stand apart by himself, an isolated and independent actor; he was the generative root, and to a certain extent the representative of all his descendants. But as the connection of Adam with his posterity, and the measure in which their character and condition depended on his conduct, will come before us as special subjects of inquiry, when we come to treat of the present state of man as a moral agent, we shall for the present waive a particular examination of these points; and this we may do with the more propriety and advantage, as all the passages in Scripture which bear on them do so in relation to man as fallen.

Whatever disadvantages and difficulties in regard to moral action have been occasioned to his posterity by

the fall of Adam, corresponding advantages and facilities would have been enjoyed by them had he stood. The greater the evil may be which has resulted from his fall, the greater would have been the corresponding good which would have followed his fidelity. If Adam's sinning has entailed on all his posterity a propension towards evil, a like propension towards good would have been the result of his obedience. If man now comes into existence with the seeds of death in his constitution, that constitution would then (may we not conclude?) have embodied the principle of an immortal life. And if he was furnished with all the powers necessary to qualify him for yielding obedience, and had strength sufficient to have resisted the temptations with which he was assailed, do not these adaptations of the constitution of human nature, and of the economy under which man was placed, not only vindicate but gloriously illustrate the benignity and goodness of God in his original treatment of man?

But the Divine goodness and benignity are farther manifested, in the admirable adaptation of the constitution of human nature to promote the kindly affections. We cannot conceive that beings sustaining no other relation to each other, but corporeal or mental resemblance, could ever feel such a mutual interest and tender regard, as creatures, one portion of whom derive their existence from the other. The various relations arising out of this element of humanity, contribute to evolve and cultivate a highly interesting order of feeling, which, so far as we can perceive, must have been wanting under any other economy. Now the very perfection of the intelligent universe seems to consist in a union of love. Solitary intelligences cognizant only of their Creator may be conceived of; but there

seems no reason to conclude that they anywhere exist The highest created being would be overwhelmed and rendered powerless if he stood alone in the conscious presence of the Eternal. Advancement, mental and moral, is the result of the interaction of like minds. A solitary being, wanting the stimulus which relation to, and contact with, such supply, would, so far as we can perceive, be but ill adapted either for mental or moral advancement. But the original constitution of human nature was not only adapted to individual advancement, but by mutual stimulation, and the interest excited by intimate relationship, admirably adapted for facilitating the advancement of the whole race.

And yet further may the constitution of human nature be vindicated as being one pre-eminently favourable. If the disposition of mankind in regard to moral volition and action was made greatly to depend on the conduct of Adam, he was placed in circumstances more favourable for obedience than any of his posterity could have been placed in. The relations and consequently the duties of the first pair were few and simple, compared with those of the members of numerous families, and of complicated communities. Adam had it thus in his power to have passed through his incipient probation, in a sphere secluded from the more subtle order of mental temptation. He had no superiors whom he might be tempted to envy, or to disobey; and there were none over whom his own superiority might excite pride, consequently the risk of erring in his case was comparatively limited. True it is he wanted experience, but then he enjoyed immediate divine teaching. The narration in Gen. iii. 8—12, shows that Adam and Eve were not strangers to Divine manifestations. And though the communi-

cations of men in their intercourse with each other may often be frivolous, we may be assured that the communications of God to his creatures will never be of this character,—" his ways are not as ours." Then by this constitution had Adam stood, all his descendants would have been placed in perhaps the most favourable position in which moral agents can be placed consistently with the exercise of such agency, as his fall reduced them to, perhaps, the worst. Starting on his career of moral agency with a powerful propension or disposition towards good, this propension would have been cherished by parents and guardians, in whom it had acquired the force and stability of habit. Each generation would have watched over and trained the succeeding, which would have been confirmed in goodness ere it passed from under its predecessor's care. What is now productive, and perpetuatory of evil, the connection and influence of parents with their children, would, in that case, have been productive only of good. But why, it may be asked, so constitute man that such evils were possible? Why not make the origin of existence in each individual independent of every other? Angels were so created, yet that did not prevent many of them from sinning, nor from leading each other to sin. Why then did God permit the existence of sin at all; God could have prevented sin had he pleased? This question just resolves itself into that other, why did God create moral agents? for the existence of such necessarily implies the possibility of sin, else they could not be free to act as they choose. Why did God create any creature endowed with reason, capable of knowing him, and of yielding him a conscious obedience? why did he constitute any species of living agency

higher than instinctive? If by Adam's obedience all his posterity would have entered on existence in a state highly favourable to their continuance in moral good, this was what he received powers competent to ensure. If his sin has entailed on them a disposition highly unfavourable to such good, this is not God's fault, but Adam's. The assertion is daily reiterated, that God could have prevented moral evil had he pleased; but those who affirm this, do not seem to inquire whether he could have done so in consistency with moral agency. Moral action can be influenced only by presenting motives; whenever force is applied, action ceases to be moral. Man was supplied with knowledge commensurate to his responsibility. He was told his duty; he was warned of the consequences should he sin. The strongest motives were presented to induce him to obey: life and good should he obey; death and evil should he disobey. It is not less necessary to moral agency that occasions should be presented for the exercise of the power of choice, than that the power itself should be possessed,—such an occasion was the tree of knowledge,—indeed without this the power would be entirely useless. Were only one course of action possible, or were the possibility of any other hid from the view of the agent, or were he prevented from pursuing any other by an abiding impression so powerful as to preclude all other impressions, as occurs in some cases of insanity,—action in any of these cases could not be moral. Man as a moral agent had an occasion presented to him for exercising the power of choice, and he was allowed to act "according to the freedom of his will," or according to choice; but he was not "left" without divine teaching, nor was he placed in a situation permitting

him to forget his dependence on God. The test of obedience, we have already seen, was one adapted to keep alive sentiments of faith and holy awe. Divine operations conducive to his comfort were constantly going on before his eyes: "The Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them to Adam, to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." Hebrew names are all expressive, and no mean powers of mind must he have been endowed with, who could be qualified to give such names to "every beast of the field and every fowl of the air." "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman; because she was taken out of man." In every question as to what God could do in regard to living agents, is not only involved whether the Divine power be competent to produce the effect asserted to be possible, but whether the thing can be done consistently with the nature and constitution of the agent. In the present case the proper question is not whether God had power, or was able to have prevented man from sinning,—it may not be doubted but God had such power,—but, whether he could have done so consistently with man's continuing a moral agent? Seeing man was fully informed of his duty, and the most awful sanctions placed before him as motives to its

performance, and dissuasives from sin, whether more could have been done for the prevention of moral evil without at the same time preventing moral good—making man an animated mechanism impelled by instinct like the brutes, instead of being directed by reason.

The constitution of human nature renders impossible a strictly independent individual responsibility; indeed absolute independence of action is not compatible with the existence of any social economy whatever: wherever rational natures have intercourse together, they will to some extent influence each other. But strict independence is not necessary to our idea of personal moral agency, only that the agent have power to act according to the suggestion or influence of his fellows, or against it, as he judges right. Such influence may just be a form of trial,—trial of some sort being, as we have seen already, necessary to the exercise of moral agency. By the constitution of human nature, the measure of relative responsibility is much greater than in beings who owe their existence to independent acts of creation. Adam was responsible for his posterity to the extent to which his conduct was to determine the moral tendency of their minds, and to that also to which his good or evil example might be the initiative of a series of corresponding example, going down through the entire period of the existence of the race.

Quite in harmony with the moral powers and constitution of man was that of his organic nature, and of the external world. His body was sound and healthful, without any predisposition to disease and decay; yet it was possible enough for him to have injured it,—there were trees, for example, in Eden, against

which, by carelessness or rashness, he might have run himself and produced fracture or contusion. The ground was stocked with the proper plants; its native produce was not thorns or thistles, yet man was placed "in Eden to dress it and to keep it,"—even Eden, then, by neglect, was liable to go into disorder. Like the moral disposition of man, it was originally in a right state, but required care and labour to prevent it from going wrong.

SECTION III.

INQUIRY RESPECTING THE USES OF SUFFERING.

We should now have proceeded to the inquiry respecting the Scriptural account of the present moral state and position of man; but a question presents itself at the entrance, of which it seems highly desirable to seek some solution, in order to clear our way for such an inquiry, which will no doubt prove perplexed enough, though freed as far as possible from all collateral difficulties.

Wherever we look around us in the world, there is one thing which presents itself to us on every hand—which meets us at all times, in every rank of life, and in every situation—and that is, suffering. However we may settle the question as to its causes, or its ends, or though it should baffle all our efforts to account for it, still it will not be the less true that the history of our world, like the roll of the prophet, is filled with "lamentation, and mourning, and woe."

Three uses of suffering may be conceived of,—the physical, the moral, and the punitive,—its physical use is to extend and heighten the susceptibility of en-

joyment: as without labour we could not know what rest is, so comfort and ease derive a peculiar delightfulness from the recollection of privation and pain; and the sense of difficulties surmounted, and of opposition overcome, is the very essence of triumph. We affirm not that there could be no enjoyment without relation to suffering; but such enjoyment would be wanting in the highest elements. Whether this be the main purpose which it serves in the case of the lower animals, or whether it has any connection with a moral being, incipient, or afterwards to be developed, are questions which we are not competent to solve. The sufferings of the lower animals have been very generally regarded as occasioned chiefly or solely by the sin of man; but such a conclusion seems discredited by the recent disclosures of geological research. These astonishing disclosures open up to us an entirely new view of the constitution of the universe, and in casting about for a solution of the (as it seems to our notions) awful and anomalous fact of the universal prevalence of suffering and death, the idea presents itself that trial and pain may be indispensable to the development of mind, as we have every reason to believe they are in every system of moral agency. It has been generally assumed, but unphilosophically, we think, and certainly without any authority from Scripture,—that the original state of man must have been one of unmingled enjoyment; and preachers and poets have strained their imaginations, and exhausted nature for images to picture its felicity. Now if the principles we have been endeavouring to establish be correct, a being gliding on the stream of undisturbed enjoyment—nothing desirable denied him, and nothing to regulate or restrain,—could not be a moral being.

As to the moral use of suffering, then, we conceive that something of that nature is inseparable from a state of moral probation. We have repeatedly had occasion to observe, that trial is essential to moral agency. But what is trial? Can there be any trial but what involves something desirable which we have to refrain from? or something difficult to perform, or something painful to submit to? There is nothing morally great—nothing even deserving praise in a moral view, but what involves difficulty; nothing but what interferes with the ease which would have been enjoyed at the time in not doing it, if it is an exertion, or the anticipated pleasure if it is an act of self-denial. Where is the thing which deserves the name of trial, in which the mind does not suffer? Let it be but a privation, if it is of what is ardently desired, the suffering may be great; and if it is not desired, nor the want of it felt, it cannot be called a privation: let it be what interferes with our ease or comfort in any way, it must be repugnant to the mind, as interfering with that happiness which the mind always *would* enjoy. Indeed every moral trial involves a choice, contrary to what we would make at the time, were ease or happiness alone regarded. I may appeal to the reader whether moral trial in the form of self-denial, or privation of what the mind earnestly desires, may not be as distressing as a high degree of bodily pain. If it might not be so, how could it be possible for incorporeal beings to suffer intensely; for even remorse derives much of its bitterness, from the *want* of an opportunity of retracing the fatal step which has wakened up its horrors. These considerations may serve not only to abate the painful and desponding feeling, with which we are apt to contemplate the pre-

valence of suffering among a race of beings in such a moral state as ours, but also forbid our expecting to find any class of moral agents in a state of probation, entirely free from it. Under these considerations likewise we are led to inquire in what cases suffering is really an evil. It cannot be so where it is contributing to the developement of higher powers of action and endurance, or generating a capacity for higher enjoyment, than would have otherwise been possessed. Instead of regarding sufferings, when productive of such results, as evils, we are taught both by Christ and his inspired messengers to regard them as pre-eminent privileges and blessings: "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven." "We glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." "To you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake."

On these principles we are not entitled to pronounce that the most anomalous of all the modes of suffering which come under our view—that of the lower animals—is to them an evil, seeing we know not how far it may contribute to enhance their enjoyment; and are ignorant whether they may not have a future destination, in regard to which it may be subserving the most important purposes.

The punitive is the most obvious of all the uses of suffering; but though easily distinguishable from what is strictly probatory, corrective, or stimulative, there is no reason to conclude, that under the Divine ad-

ministration, there is any infliction of punishment simply for its own sake. Suffering the most strictly punitive, is, we may believe, in every case, intended to have a moral influence; and this it may have, first on those who are the subjects of the law of which it is announced as the penalty, in preventing or deterring them from violating that law; and secondly, when inflicted on the violators of it, acting as a warning to all who behold this.

Suffering strictly punitive is brought on or inflicted as the punishment of violation of law; but that the sufferings of mankind in the present state are in a great degree, at least, not punitive, is evident from obvious facts: human beings suffer before they are conscious, and consequently before they are capable of knowing right from wrong: they suffer likewise from the faults of others, in which they had no share; and in the course of providence, when suffering arises from causes not traceable to human agency at all, the innocent are often as great or greater sufferers than the guilty. Such seemingly anomalous treatment is generally accounted for by reference to a future equitable and compensatory retribution; but any difficulty which it at first sight presents may be solved as scripturally, and quite as well, by regarding it as intended to subserve moral elevation, and increase the capacity of future enjoyment. To those who have embraced the offer, and are using the instruments of moral renovation, suffering, as we have already seen, is represented in scripture as a high boon and privilege. And certain we are, that without severe trial or painful endurance, there never could have been anything morally great. By obvious necessity moral greatness implies great effort, or perilous trial, or great suffering; and

with profound reverence we may be allowed to say, that the moral greatness of the Divine character even, could never have been displayed, had God never been assailed by any opposition, had the conduct of his rational creatures not brought him into circumstances, peculiarly trying to the moral qualities of his nature.

Keeping all these considerations in view, we can hardly conclude with a noble living author :* ' That, generally speaking, the preservation and happiness of sensitive creatures appears to be the great object of creative exertion and conservative providence.' Rather is it, it should seem, that infinitely higher one, the production and development of susceptible mind, and especially of a rational and moral universe, reflecting its Author's own glorious image, and destined to make unlimited advances—though never capable of approaching—towards his boundless perfection, and consequently towards his sublime felicity. The highest enjoyments of sense are of a low order essentially : their zest is of brief duration, or if attempted to be prolonged, invariably results in pain ; but the enjoyment arising from successful struggles, from difficulties surmounted, from opposition overcome, and from suffering patiently endured, is essentially noble, consonant to the nature of mind, never becomes effete by repetition, and is circumscribed by no constitutional limits as to its duration.

Death, as it is the termination of corporeal suffering, is also its consummation. Is it to be regarded as an instrument of moral discipline, or solely as punitive ? Death considered as the permanent dissolution of human nature, with no hope of recovery or a resur-

* Lord Brougham.—Origin of Evil.

rection,—which was doubtless the import of the original threatening,—must be regarded as purely punitive. Being the irremediable dissolution of the constituent elements which form the distinctive being, man; and sufficient of itself, where there was no special provision made to prevent it, to terminate the happy existence or enjoyment of the soul, death simply or without relation to a resurrection and a remedial economy, could not be regarded in the light of an instrument of moral discipline at all. How could it be such to a creature of whose distinctive being it was to be the inevitable end? to whom without the revelation of a provision of mercy it must have been the termination of all hopeful prospect. Speak of moral discipline to a being who had no good to hope for, even in the faintest degree, beyond this brief life? It is only when viewed in connection with a glorious resurrection, and as the translation of the soul from a deteriorated and perishing body, and a life exposed to innumerable serious ills, into a state and sphere, where happiness is secured to it by special Divine provisions, that death can be contemplated as other than the most dreadful of evils. When a future and endless life is brought to light, whose state as to happiness or misery is to accord with the deeds done in the present, then indeed, it becomes a powerful instrument of moral discipline, inasmuch as it is an event to which we are inevitably hastening, that will bring the soul into immediate contact with God, and introduce it into a state of endless felicity or woe.

But death has been represented as coming on man not as a punitive divine infliction, but according to a law of nature, by which all organized existence returns after a time to its constituent elements. But as we

have already found, that it is owing to nothing in the nature of matter that there is organized existence at all, the return of organized forms to their constituent elements must be regarded as the result of a Divine arrangement, consequently as resulting from the Divine will: therefore though all organized bodies which come under our observation are subject to such a law, we are not then entitled to infer that all such must be so. There can be no question but the power which can sustain organized bodies in vigour forty or fifty years, could do so for ever, or at any rate could transmute them into a state adapted to immortal life without subjecting them to death, as has already been the case with two of mankind, and as we are assured will be the case with all that are alive at the last day.*

Because dissolution is the law or order of existence, where there is only a material organization, or where an animal nature is predominant, is no proof that it must be so where the animal nature is subordinate to a ruling, intelligent, accountable mind; rather may it not be a question whether the subjection of humanity to this law is not a consequence of the revolt of the animal nature, or "flesh," from its subordination.

* Note G.

SECTION IV.

RESPECTING THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW OF THE PRESENT CONDITION OF MAN AS A MORAL BEING.

THE great question which introduces the inquiry indicated by the title of this chapter, is, What were the consequences of the original sin of Adam, or of what is generally designated the Fall: for on the view which we adopt as an answer to this question will depend the complexion of our estimate of the whole existing moral economy.

In endeavouring to find the proper answer to this question, then, it seems important to distinguish between the judicial consequences of Adam's sin, or those brought on by punitive infliction; and those which, for want of a better term we may call natural, or such as inevitably took place by the constitution of man as a rational and moral being. And first, as to the latter. It seems involved in the very constitution of rational mind, that sin, or acting contrary to Divine command, must put an end to happy communion with God. When we do what even an earthly superior

enjoins, or desires us to do, we expect that it will attract his favourable regard. Cheerful obedience is the ground of mutual complacency, and the reciprocation of esteem and love. But when we do what has been forbidden by one who has authority over us, especially if a penalty has been annexed to the law, we are afraid to meet our superior, and under the influence of shame and suspicion and fear, we shun his presence. Then, under the consciousness of guilt expecting his frown, and anticipating the infliction of punishment, while at the same time our self-partiality hides very much our desert of it: actuated by these feelings, we soon begin to hate him. Moreover, as every conscious and susceptible being, instinctively dreads suffering, and endeavours to avoid it; without some valid assurance of forgiveness, there would never be any approaches on the part of the culprit towards him whose law he had violated, and whom owing to this he could contemplate only as an avenger; conceiving himself pursued to be punished, if he could elude his pursuer he would not think of suing for a reconciliation. So it is with man in regard to his Maker; for we find that the scriptural account of the result of the sin of our first parents, is, that shame and fear caused them to endeavour to hide themselves from the presence of God: "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself."

Unless measures were taken on the part of God, to remove this displacency towards him on the part of the transgressor, it could not but continue and increase. Until his mind can entertain the hope of pardon, "iniquity" must still "separate" the sinner from his sove-

reign. That separation from God, then, in which spiritual death is commonly regarded as consisting, took place immediately on the sin of man, by the very constitution of his mind, and needed no punitive infliction to bring it on. We have already reviewed the reasons which are found in the history of human thought and action for concluding that this displacency is inherited by all the race; and that such is the case, the testimony of scripture is full and explicit: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. .... That which is born of the flesh is flesh." "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." That in the nature of the case there cannot be any approach first on the part of man towards God, is clearly stated to us by our Lord: "No man can come unto me except the Father who sent me draw him." So his apostle in applying the language of the Psalmist, declares, "There is none that seeketh after God." And Christ in addressing an auditory of his countrymen, traces this estrangement to a repugnancy of mind, or want of will: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." In regard, moreover, to moral action generally, the scripture declares of men, that, "There is none righteous, no not one. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doth good, no not one." Such general declarations respecting the character of man, have been very commonly regarded as applicable to him during the entire term of his animal existence, or natural life. In doing so, however, we think the important distinction between man when capable of moral action, in other words, when he can distinguish between good and evil, and man before he is capable of doing so, has been overlooked. The Bible is addressed to men as

rational and moral agents; it is therefore uniformly practical in its bearings. Indeed it is involved in the very idea of such a collection of principles of belief, precepts, exhortations, examples, warnings, that those to whom it is addressed be capable of understanding it, and of acting as it prescribes. Being thus entirely a practical book, and regarding and bearing on man as a moral agent, it seems right that we should understand its general declaration, respecting the moral state and character of man, as applying to him in those stages of life, and states of mind, in which he is capable of moral action; and it does not seem accordant with just views of the intention of revelation to regard these declarations, as on account of their universality necessarily including infants, when in the nature of things the Bible cannot possibly be addressed to them. The universality of the declarations can certainly never necessitate the inclusion of more than all who are capable of the sentiments and actions they attribute. In regard to every one of the "all" who are declared to have "become unprofitable," it is implied in the declaration, that they had it in their power to be profitable; the declaration, "there is none that understandeth," implies that those to whom it is applicable are capable of acquiring the knowledge they are affirmed to want, which infants evidently are not. Still less are they capable of some of the evils affirmed of men universally in an unregenerate state; they certainly do not "deceive with their tongues" who cannot speak, nor can "their feet be swift to shed blood" who cannot walk. But that such declarations cannot be applicable to infants, is not established by inference alone, however certain, but is abundantly manifest from other passages of scripture that expressly refer to them.

The inspired writers define sin to be the transgression of law, and distinctly tell us that "where there is no law there is no transgression." Now, moral law can be no law to those who are incapable of knowing it; to such it can have no relation; in order to be obeyed, law must first be known. But infants are declared incapable of knowing either good or evil; and being so, they certainly cannot be capable of knowing the law which distinguishes them: "Your little ones which had no knowledge between good and evil." Deut. i. 39. "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good." Isa. vii. 15. And infants, supposing it possible for them to be guilty of sin, could never be convicted of guilt, seeing they are incapable of knowing law, "for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Moreover, "whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." But infants are not under it; it can be no rule of action to them, for it has no relation to their state; it implies power in those to whom it is addressed, which they possess not and cannot possess; consequently they are not included in "all the world" thus shewn to be "guilty."* Furthermore our Lord while on earth, once and again, treated infants and little children, and spoke of them in a way inconsistent with the supposition of guilt, or strict moral pravity: "Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children,

* Infants are designed innocents in scripture. Compare Jer. ii. 34, and xv. 4, with Psalm cvi. 37, 38, Lev. xviii. 21, and 2 Chron. xxviii. 3.

ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." "And they brought unto him also infants that he should touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Moreover, our Lord in answer to a question put to him by the pharisees—"Are we blind," said, "If ye were blind, ye should not have sin;" now in this sense infants are blind, wanting spiritual perception; on this principle therefore they cannot have sin.

The reader who adheres to the current (Calvinistic) theology, if he has had patience to proceed so far, may not unlikely be tempted to dash aside the book by this time, and denounce the writer as a pestilent heretic, teaching worse than Pelagian error—denying original sin, and even the natural depravity of man; such we would request to suspend his judgment till our case be fully heard. Such a reader will no doubt himself admit, that there are at least many kinds of evil or sin which do not manifest themselves in the heart and life of man from the first, many which in fact he is incapable of committing; yet *he* regards this as no proof that man's nature is not depraved, and why should he insist that *we* must regard man as naturally pure and upright, because we do not admit that moral pravity can be strictly attributable to him previously to his being a moral agent. In relation to man in the early stages of his being in this world, as well as in regard to the present mortal organization of the saints as preceding an immortal and etherial body, it is true, that,

" that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural," or animal ; and while man manifests only the characteristics of animal life, while all that distinguishes rational being is dormant, or undeveloped,— while self-consciousness, or a sense of individual independent agency is wanting, it is certainly little less than absurd to attribute to him qualities, or features of character, which involve the existence of rational and moral powers. We have already come to the conclusion that a *tendency* to evil is shewn in the constitution of man. But many of the physical powers and susceptibilities which are proper to his nature or the constitution of his being, are not developed at first ; rather, we should say, none are in other than a rudimentary state ; they are not perfected till manhood ; and some of his most important and interesting susceptibilities are not awakened till he touches its verge. Man then is not to be regarded as free from all original tendency to evil because it cannot manifest itself from the commencement of his being ; it seems to us quite sufficient to prove that he has such a tendency, if it manifests itself in connection with his various powers and susceptibilities so soon as time or circumstances call them forth. If, as we have already observed in a previous chapter, so soon as man was capable of acquiring a knowledge of God, he showed a readiness to receive such knowledge, and a disposition to seek it ; if so soon as he could comprehend in any measure his character and claims, an habitual holy awe and reverence possessed his mind in regard to him, and if ready submission and cheerful obedience were the characteristic tenor of his life, should we not certainly say that he had a natural disposition towards good? Now if the sad reverse of all this is in fact

the case, does it not compel us to conclude that he has a natural disposition towards evil?

The testimony of scripture then conducts us to the same conclusions which we formerly arrived at, by an examination of the history and constitution of human nature. We affirm not—neither, we conceive, warrant us to affirm—that infants are holy; but that neither holiness nor sin are strictly predicable of them, that whatever tendency is in them to evil must be physical so long as they are unconscious of a distinction between good and evil, and that moral qualities are strictly predicable of them, only when they become capable of knowing law, and consequently of obedience or disobedience. So much at present for the effects resulting from the original sin of Adam, by the constitution of man: we are now to inquire what were its judicial consequences.

The apostle Paul informs us, that "By one offence sentence came upon all men to condemnation." Now the question is, condemnation to what? or, what was the extent of the condemnation which Adam according to the original threatening came under by sinning? and do all his posterity come into the world under the same condemnation?

"In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," was the original threatening; and we conceive that it announced at once the judicial penalty of disobedience, and the effects which would certainly result from it according to the constitution of human nature. According to the idiom of the Hebrew language, the threatening runs, "dying thou shalt die," which leaves it doubtful whether, though the sentence had been allowed to take its full effect, it would have involved the immediate dissolution of human nature or not: at

any rate it did not involve annihilation; for among all the variety of meanings which death bears in scripture, it never imports that. We have already seen that the breaking up of fellowship in spirit with God, and the cessation of improving and happy intercourse with him, in other words, spiritual death, was the immediate certain consequence of disobedience; and that without special measures on the part of God for effecting a reconciliation, this separation must continue and increase. These two elements then, the separation of the soul from the body, threatened as a punitive infliction, and the separation between the soul and God, were sufficient, if the soul was to be immortal, to make its immortal existence one of misery,—their continuance, which nothing but a special intervention of Divine mercy and power could prevent, would constitute in its strictest sense eternal death, whether the justice of God should require any positive subjection of the soul to punitive suffering or not, which we conceive the threatening itself neither warrants us to affirm nor deny. At all events we may conclude that God's hatred of sin would continue to be manifested by precluding access to any sources of enjoyment. Can we form any conception of the state of a spirit thus denuded; retaining its consciousness and proper susceptibilities, yet divested of its vehicle of intercourse with the world of sense; cut off from all happy communion with the Father of spirits; conscious of his presence only to be conscious of his awful frown. Who shall conceive of the utter darkness of the dwelling place of such a spirit,—a darkness with not a ray of hope, even, to relieve it. And this, be it remembered, is the mildest view of the punishment of primal disobedience which scripture

permits us to entertain; for from its general tenor, the probability of a positive infliction of punishment might be maintained with much force of argument; and as our first parents had yielded themselves servants to Satan, that they should share in his doom, such being explicitly declared to be the fate of all who serve him *now*.

Do all mankind, then, come into the world condemned to such a destiny; and with such a perversion of their moral powers, that they are unable to act in any other way than so as fearfully to enhance their doom? Are the whole race, then, the heirs of perdition, by a sentence pronounced, and a nature determined, long ere they were born; with the exception of a select number whom God of his mere sovereign pleasure hath chosen and given to Christ, to be redeemed from sin and wrath?

Against a view of the condition of our race, so gloomy and appalling, we might argue, that the present constitution of the world is not congruous with the supposition of such a moral position of its principal inhabitant. We might reason that a system of nature affording to all indiscriminately, so many grounds and encouragements for hope, and a life embodying so many marked elements of a probationary state, seem anything but accordant with what we should suppose would be the condition of the foredoomed victims of eternal wrath. Were such the view we must take of the state of the vast majority of mankind, we might be tempted to ask whether all the favourable elements of the present life were other than the most bitter and cruel tantalizing? we might adduce against it its repugnance to the indestructible sense of justice, and consequently to all proper notions

of the Divine character. Its improbability might be further argued from what we might imagine to be a system of external nature, congruous with such a condition,—we might conjure up before the imagination of the reader,—and challenge his reason whether the picture were not in harmony with such a scheme,—a race lashed on to perdition by perpetual storms, over a blighted and burning soil, beneath a sky scowling with leaden gloom, relieved only by lurid lightnings, and opening never to disclose the radiance of sun or star; every movement painful, every sensation a pang, and the only intercourse an interchange of spleen, malevolence, or execration,—with far a-head in view, the ascending smoke of the bottomless pit, and the wailings of the damned blending with the sullen roar of the lake of fire! Such considerations as these and others might be adduced as bearing against the notion, that a condemnation to eternal perdition rests on all men on account of the sin of Adam; but on a question so momentous it is proper to come at once to the standard of truth, "What saith the Scripture?" It indeed informs us that "by one offence sentence came upon all men to condemnation;" but does it say that this condemnation rests on them? No; but that "by one righteousness, sentence has come on all men to justification of life." The same infallible authority informs us, that "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world," which obviously implies that whatever condemnation the world was under, there was yet another and further condemnation deserved, else there would have been no room for speaking of it as an end for which Christ might have been sent "to condemn it." "God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be

saved"—implying that the world was in a salvable state,—a fact inconsistent with the notion of the majority of its inhabitants lying under eternal wrath. What was it then which moved God to send his Son into the world? it was his unspeakable love: to whom? —to the elect? Not so, testifies the Son himself; he declares it to have been love to the world: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thus it was not love merely to a select and chosen number that prompted God to devise and execute the scheme of redemption; but a love of such unlimited comprehensiveness, as by the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, to afford ground of justification, and consequently of salvation to all, whosoever they might be, who should believe on him; a ground so ample as to justify the invitation, "whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," and fully to vindicate the Divine sincerity in the declaration that "God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." If it be really true that God is not willing that any should perish, and that "he will have all men to be saved," how could he have from eternity condemned the bulk of mankind to perdition, not for anything they have personally done (anterior even to personal trial) solely for his own glory. Were there anything in scripture necessitating a belief like this, how could we suppress the most painful suspicions respecting the sincerity of God in the unrestricted and universal offer of salvation. The declaration of St. Paul in writing to the Ephesians, that they had been by nature the children of wrath, even as others, is frequently adduced as proof that mankind are born under condemnation;

but if the observations above be correct, a thing's being natural to man, or belonging to his nature, is no proof that it is predicable of him from his birth. It is natural for the wheat-plant, or it is in its nature, to produce ripe grain; but he certainly were a strange reasoner who, from this should infer, that this ripe grain must be in the green leaves which it puts forth in spring. But apart from these considerations, —and though such a sense were not incompatible with numerous other declarations of scripture, to several of which we have just referred,—the obvious sense of the context alone from which the declaration springs,—"were by nature the children of wrath,"—would hardly permit us to infer that they were born such, but evidently bears that they were so, inasmuch as they had been grievous personal sinners: "You," saith the apostle, "were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;" how could persons thus devoted in heart and soul to iniquity but be characterized as children of wrath, even by their very nature, seeing "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men?"

The other passage so often adduced as proof of the opinion we are controverting, viz., Rom. v. 12—19, embodies the fullest refutation of it, inasmuch as whatever be the condemnation which is there declared to have come on all by Adam, a justification or deliverance commensurate in extent, and in some respects

vastly greater, comes, we are explicitly informed, on all by Christ. From all the consequences of the sin of Adam which come on men involuntarily,—from all share in his sin or the evils it has entailed, in all cases in which we do not continue to make it our own by personal and impenitent transgression,—this passage teaches us that Christ brings, if not an immediate, an ultimate deliverance. Whether the original threatening in its full extent involved any permanent condemnation of the whole race for Adam's sin or not, the Scriptures are explicit, that it now involves no such consequence. Invariably are we informed that the final award of retribution will be assigned to every one "*according to his works.*" "They that have *done good* shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and they that have *done evil* to the resurrection of damnation." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." The declaration of the Saviour respecting the final separation of mankind is, that "these," referring to those he had described as despisers of him and his people, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

If then, a justification to life comes on all men by the one righteousness of Christ, commensurate with the condemnation, whatever it was, which came on all by Adam, it becomes of less moment whether we ascertain precisely what was the extent of that condemnation or not; nevertheless it is desirable that we should if possible do so, on many accounts; for on our doing this will depend our competence to un-

derstand aright some very important declarations of scripture, and it will be found indispensable to just notions of the value and bearings of the redemptive economy. As none who arrives at the period of conscious rational agency is saved, unless by a voluntary act of mind he embrace the salvation offered, or in an important sense, make the righteousness of Christ his own; is it not reasonable to infer (inasmuch as the reparation by Christ is to be commensurate with the damage done by Adam) that even though there had been no redemption prepared for mankind, none would have been positively sentenced to everlasting misery who did not make Adam's sin his own by voluntary transgression. But a remedy having been provided, this is not our present inquiry, but, what is the condemnation which has actually come on all men by Adam's sin? In search for a distinct answer to this question, let us turn first to the narrative in Genesis. When the Lord God had traced the original transgression to its source, he is represented as pronouncing sentence severally on the serpent, the woman, and the man. Passing over the serpent, and all the difficulties connected with the part of the narrative which relates to him, as not being our immediate concernment; we find the sentence pronounced on our first parents to run thus: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also

and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." Here then temporal death is the last and greatest of the evils which man was adjudged to suffer as the inevitable punishment of the original transgression. Did this, and the other evils to which our first parents were thus condemned, come on them alone? The universal history of their progeny embodies the unequivocal answer to such a question. But do greater evils than these come on Adam's posterity as a punishment for his sin? No greater evils are here declared inevitable to Adam himself. And shall there be a commutation of the punishment involved in the original threatening permitted in the case of him the actual transgressor, and yet that sentence allowed to take its most rigorous effect on multitudes of his posterity who could not possibly have any blame in the matter? That his descendants are not explicitly mentioned in this condemnatory sentence, can be no valid objection, for as little are they mentioned in the original threatening; and they have certainly been subjected to the specified evils not less than he was himself. We may here remark that this treating of Adam, even after his fall, as still as in a measure the representative of his posterity; and this condemning of them only by implication, in the sentence passed on him, seems to militate against the scheme of those, who, adhering to the most rigid views of the federal and representative character of Adam up to the moment of his fall, immediately reduce him to as bare an individuality in regard to moral influence as any of his descendants. In

the sacred narrative, however, we find God still treating him as in some respect the representative as well as the generative root of all his race; but not however so, as that any future act of his was to involve any judicial consequences in regard to them. According to the views of high Calvinists, Adam's posterity were in the Divine eye considered one with him in his first sin. Now if such were the case, how could they in justice have been regarded in any other light in its remission? Can we conceive of God as removing the condemnation from Adam the actual sinner, and allowing his posterity to remain under it, none of whom existed when it was committed? And if Adam was not delivered from the condemnation of his first sin, was it possible for him to be saved? And if God left Adam in a condition in which it was impossible for him to be saved, how can we vindicate the proclamation of mercy, or the sincerity of the declaration that God is not willing that any should perish, but will have all men to be saved? It may be said that his deliverance from condemnation depended on his becoming penitent, and that so does that of any of his posterity. But can there possibly be any such identity or even similarity of the feeling, as to warrant its being called by the same name, in his mind who reflects on having consciously and voluntarily committed an act of disobedience; and in their's in reference to the same act; who had no existence when it was committed, and consequently who had it not in their power either to concur or dissent. If we are to admit such indefiniteness, not to say perversion in the use of language, all hope of any approach even to certainty in mental or theological inquiries is at an end.

Further: if we regard the condemnation coming on

all, by the first sin of man, as involving a greater evil than temporal death; the contrast drawn by the apostle between Christ and Adam in 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22, as to the influence each had in regard to all mankind, will be involved in insuperable difficulty: "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If we regard the death which all die in Adam, as meaning simply the separation of the soul from the body, and connected temporal evils, the reparation effected by Christ is commensurate with the extent of the injury, and the sense distinct and unincumbered. But if we hold that the death which comes on all by Adam, involves an evil greater than, and beyond the separation of soul and body, will it not follow that the making of all alive by Christ must involve a good of a corresponding character, beyond their reunion. In a word, how can we affirm that the death coming by the one, involves eternal misery, and deny that the life coming by the other, involves eternal happiness? But besides, is it not inconsistent with the scope of the apostles' discourse to regard eternal consequences of a spiritual nature as meant in either case, seeing he is treating simply of the resurrection of the dead? These observations are equally applicable to Rom. v. 18, for if we regard the condemnation which came on all by the "one offence," as involving eternal misery, we are there taught that a justification of commensurate extent, and consequently including eternal happiness, has come on all by the "one righteousness;" an assumption not only incompatible with numerous express declarations of scripture, but incongruous to its entire strain and bearing from beginning to end.

After what has been said above, it may hardly be needful to remark, that regarding the condemnation which has come on all men by the sin of Adam as not involving any greater evil than temporal death, is not inconsistent with the fact of a moral depravation coming on all by his sinning; this taking place, not in consequence of any punitive sentence, but by being involved in the constitution of human nature.

If then temporal death is the greatest evil, which will be ultimately repaired to men by Christ, independent of any concurrence on their part, are we not shut up to the conclusion that it was the greatest evil included in the condemnation coming on all by Adam, as that condemnation came on them independent of any act or concurrence of their's; otherwise how should we account for the declaration of the apostle, that the substitution of Christ has done much more than repaired the evils to which men have been subjected on account of Adam's sin: "If through the offence of one," says he, "the many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto the many." Moreover, if the death which reigned by one, was both spiritual and eternal as well as temporal, what is there much more than the reparation of this in the life by one Jesus Christ, in which they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign with him? The evils of the mind which the sin of Adam has had an influence in producing, are of another order. They are not produced without any voluntary act or concurrence of our own, and so neither without this are they removed. Whatever disposition to such evils the mind has by nature, is of course involuntary; but the disposition to an evil, and

the commission of an evil, are different things. A state of feeling or disposition of mind is guilt, only when it is indulged after it is known, or might be known to be wrong. Such appears to be the view given of this matter by the apostle James : " Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed;" that is, when he indulges and yields to improper desires, whether inherent or kindled by external excitements; " for," he continues, " when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death." Here is a distinction made between lust and sin; lust, or desire for objects disallowed, arising in the mind, is not characterized as sin; but when it is allowed, or indulged in the mind so as to produce voluntary action, " lust " thus conceiving " bringeth forth sin." Every moral act then, or every moral state of a responsible mind, is a voluntary act or a voluntary state; or, in other words, is one in relation to which the mind had a choice, had it in its power to have made it different. All the moral evils to which our nature has acquired a tendency by the fall of Adam, are yet voluntary evils; in regard to every one such of which we have been guilty, it was or might have been in our power to have avoided it. It is an essential element of the sense of guilt, that we should feel that it was in our power to have done otherwise; without the consciousness of this the charge of blame-worthiness could never be brought home to the conscience.

To this view of the matter, it may be objected, that the apostle expressly asserts, that " By the disobedience of one, the many were made sinners;" which must either mean that they all sinned in him, or inevitably become sinners in consequence of the nature

they derive from him. In regard to this I would request the reader's serious attention to the following observations of Moses Stuart: 'Those who are familiar with the idiom of the original scriptures' observes this eminent biblical critic, 'must know, that *causation* of every degree and kind was usually expressed by the Hebrews in one and the same way. We are accustomed when we wish for nice distinctions, to speak of *efficient* or *principal* cause, and of *secondary* or *instrumental* or *occasional* cause, &c. But it is not so generally in the Scriptures: "God moves David to go and number Israel, and Satan moves David to go and number Israel." The very same verb is applied to both agents in this case; so "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and Pharaoh hardened his own heart." See Exod. vii. 13; ix. 12; x. 1, 20, 27; xi. 10; xiv. 8. Rom. ix. 18. Deut. ii. 30. Isa. lxiii. 17. John xii. 40. So evil is ascribed to God, both moral and natural: 2 Sam. xii. 11; xvi. 10. 1 Kings xxii. 22. Josh. xi. 20. Psalm cv. 25. 1 Kings xi. 23; xxiv. 1. In like manner God is said to give men a new heart, and they are commanded to "make to themselves a new heart;" the Spirit of God is said to convince, and convert, and regenerate the sinner: and the same thing is often ascribed, for the most part in the like words, to the Gospel and to the power of Divine truth. Now he who has not carefully noted and weighed these obvious and highly important facts, is in great danger of making out in some way a very partial system of theology, and of contradicting, in his exegesis of one part of the Bible, what the sacred writers have affirmed in another.

To apply this to the case before us: *were constituted sinners,* means, that Adam was, in some sense

or other, the cause or occasion of his posterity becoming sinners. But whether this was through a degradation of their nature, physically propagated down from father to son; or whether it was (as Chrysostom, Œcumenius, Pelagius, Erasmus, and others have maintained, although with high improbability) only by virtue of the example which he set, or whether it was in some other way, is not determined by the language of the text. Such expressions as we have seen above, do not determine of themselves either the *degree* or the *kind* of causality.

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'That men should be *constituted*, or made sinners by the disobedience of Adam, (most naturally means, I had almost said,) must necessarily mean, that in some way his offence so affected them that they become actual sinners *in propriâ personâ*. Now, is anything more common than this mode of expression: 'A man of vicious character,' we say, 'corrupts his whole family. A profligate of winning exterior corrupts the whole neighbourhood of youth around him. One sceptic makes many doubters in revelation. The example of a bad man in many respects has a tendency to render others vicious. Sinners entice others to join with them. Voltaire made half of literary Europe sceptical.' Now in these and a thousand other like expressions, we do mean to assert an active influence, a real causality in some proper sense, of the evil done or spoken. Yet we never once think, for example, of Voltaire's scepticism being *imputed* to half of literary Europe; nor do we once imagine, that any of the classes above-named as being corrupted, are corrupted without any voluntary agency of their own. The *sin* of corrupt feelings and affections is *entirely their own:*

it matters not what the causes [influences] were that operated on them, so long as they were after all left to their own choice whether they would yield to the excitement, or resist it.'*

If to these highly important and pertinent observations I might add a remark on this part of the subject, it would be to the effect that the style of the inspired writers is free and popular as contradistinguished from scientific. Their usual manner is at the farthest possible remove from the guarded statements and timorous circumlocutions of those who are chiefly concerned to save the rigidly defined points of a dogmatic or philosophical system. The end of scriptural statements is to stimulate to right action, to generate right emotions, and not (or at most but in a very secondary measure) to satisfy the cravings of metaphysical speculation. These facts always kept in view, the style and manner of the sacred writers, instead of seeming to need any apology, will appear specially marked by wisdom and appropriateness. Moreover if the Scriptures as compositions were to be governed by the laws and limitations of human thought and language, and if they had not been so, they could neither have been written by men nor have been intelligible to them—they, like other compositions, can only bring up one train of thought, or one course of narration by itself at a time. The human mind is not competent to pursue, nor human language to convey, several trains of thought alongside of each other. The relation of each of these to others, and their mutual bearings must be ascertained by collation, comparison, and inference. Besides, in every earnest hortatory discourse, the writer or speaker

* Commentary on Romans. Excursus vi. pp. 583—585.

strives to give the utmost force to the subject of his present appeal, without studying to adjust his expressions to strict philosophical rules. A consideration then of the laws and limitations of all human compositions, and of the characteristics of that order of writing under which the Scriptures chiefly rank, will show us the necessity of guarding against—what has been too common—founding systems on the extreme sense of single texts, or classes of texts, without adverting to the limitations which are imposed by other texts, or by the obvious order of nature, and the ascertained laws of matter and mind. Were we to look in the Scriptures for a system of theology rigidly defined and scientifically arranged, we should certainly look in vain. The system of truth embodied in them is to be evolved from narrative, and apologue, and hortatory appeal; and especially by the balancing of apparently antagonist statements, so as to ascertain their harmonising points and mutual limitations. Thus may we see that the true theology of the Bible is anything but open to precipitate or indolent minds. This however is not the place for enlarging on the general canons of scriptural interpretation.

From this lengthened examination of scripture passages, the general conclusion to which we come, respecting the public character of Adam, is this,—that he was constituted the probationary representative of his posterity to this extent, that had he stood, they would all, on the ground of his obedience, have entered on existence with a title to immortal life, without being subjected to any such special test as he was, and consequently would not have been in danger of forfeiting that title, but by violation of the immutable require-

ments of the moral law. Moreover as the root of a generative order of being, it would have followed from his fidelity, that all his posterity would have commenced their course as moral agents with a disposition prompting to good, and probably the law of God would have been as universally obeyed as it is now violated. Obedience would, however, in every case, have been a voluntary act, or an act of choice, as disobedience is now, and the violation of the law as possible in that condition of human nature as its fulfilment is in the present. But now, inasmuch as Adam has sinned, his descendants are brought before us as so far identified with him in the Divine eye, that they are condemned to suffer many ills, and death ultimately on his account, and in consequence of his fall, commence their term of probationary agency, with a disposition tending to a disregard and violation of the Divine law.

And these, on the other hand, are the conclusions at which we arrive, regarding the influence of the work of Christ as the sacrificial substitute of mankind. The work of Christ has a double bearing on mankind, in respect that they are subject to misfortune, and chargeable with guilt. In so far as all mankind suffer by the sin of Adam, independently of any blame on their part, they are purely the objects of pity. But had they been sufferers only by personal and wilful crime, we can scarcely conceive that they could have been so; for pity has always a relation to misfortune,—to an evil or evils which come on a person without his being to blame, or he being greatly not to blame for them. The figure adopted by the prophet Ezekiel to represent the original state of Jerusalem or the Israelitish nation,—an infant cast out in the helplessness and impurities of its birth,—may be regarded as an apt

emblem of all mankind, as sufferers in consequence of the sin of Adam, and as objects, as such, of the Divine compassion.* An exclusion of the whole race from God was occasioned by the sin of Adam, inasmuch as all became sinners in consequence of his sin, and being sinners could not but be the objects of the Divine aversion, and subjects of punishment so long as their guilt was unatoned for. The exclusion of mankind from God, thus occasioned by Adam's sin, has been annulled by Christ; so that for mankind as sinners there is now an open and unobstructed way of access to God. Christ has so far finished transgression and made an end of sin, that none are now excluded from acceptance with God and eternal life but such as wilfully and obstinately reject the offers and terms of pardon and reconciliation. Anterior to any act or thought on their part, access to God by Christ is open and free to the whole human race; and not only so, but the strongest inducements and persuasives are made use of to induce men to return to God,—persuasives and inducements addressed not to a select and favoured class, but to all,—"Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, she crieth in the chief place of concourse,"—and to whom? "To you, O *men*, I call, and my voice is to the *sons of men*." The invitation of Divine mercy runs, "Ho! every one that thirsteth!" so that "whosoever will may take of the water of life freely." Then all the evils which come on mankind by the sin of Adam, Christ neutralizes, transmutes, or repairs. The ills of the present life, included in the curse, are under the economy of mercy converted into powerful instruments of

* Ezek. xvi. 3—6.

moral discipline, and in regard of the redemption of the body, Christ is the Saviour of all men, delivering all "from the power of the grave."

But as the higher condemnation comes not on any of the descendants of Adam, but such as by voluntary choice or action make his disobedience their own: so neither does the higher justification—that which delivers from eternal wrath—come on any but such as by the mental act of faith receive as theirs the righteousness of Christ—he is the Saviour "specially of them" only "that believe." And herein appears the superabounding of the grace of Christ over the curse or condemnation by Adam, inasmuch as he will not only ultimately deliver from whatever condemnation comes on all by him, but justifies from "many" personal "offences," all who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, which he is ready to communicate, and even pressing on the acceptance of all.*

* Note H.

SECTION V.

PRESENT CONDITION OF MAN NOT INCOMPATIBLE WITH HIS BEING A MORAL AGENT.

It has been a very prevalent impression that a greater discrepancy exists between the original and the present condition of man, than will be found on a just estimate of both to be actually the case, and that, as much by regarding his primeval condition as freer from difficulty and danger than it could have been, as by viewing his present state as more than it actually is, one of disastrousness and imbecility. It seems to have been very generally tacitly assumed, that as the universe was created and is sustained by a Being essentially good and benevolent, these attributes could not permit the occurrence of suffering or of wrong-doing without the risk of discrediting their fulness or integrity. Accordingly the question, 'Whence, or how comes evil?' has from immemorial time been regarded as the grand enigma of the universe. That the occurrence of suffering under the government of a benevolent being is by no means so mysterious an anomaly as at first sight it appears, is what we have already

found, and reflection as to what is indispensable to moral agency will convince us, that neither is the occurrence of moral evil under a moral Governor such an inexplicable enigma as it is usually deemed.

The definition we proposed of moral action was, that it is action which results from choice, and is regulated by law given and sanctioned by a superior nature. The law which regulates such action then, in distinguishing or discriminating between good and evil, must bring both before the mind; it makes evil as well as good the subject of thought, so that the wonder often expressed how the thought of evil could ever enter a pure mind, is seen to be entirely groundless. Law brings before the mind evil or wrong as possible, and consequently prompts to the contemplating of it as so. This in the nature of things must be the case, if the mind think of that which is the subject of law at all: in doing this it must view what the law forbids as a possible course, or as something which *might* be done. But this is not sin unless it view such action or course of action with complacency; it becomes sin only when the mind allowedly desires or chooses to do it:—

> 'Evil into the mind of God or man
> May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
> No spot or blame behind.'

This effect of law prompting the mind to think of what it forbids, is distinctly recognised by the apostle Paul: "I had not known lust, except the law had said thou shalt not covet: but sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence."

But though the law may thus bring a pure mind to contemplate evil as possible, how can such a mind

ever come to look on it with complacency? Attention to another element of moral agency will at least abate this difficulty. If moral action be such only as results from choice, it must be possible for evil as well as good to be *chosen*, else there could be no choice or preference in doing the one rather than the other. But a thing which may be *chosen* must be capable of being viewed or represented in such an aspect as to appear desirable. That which could not be viewed as in any respect desirable, it will at once be seen, could never be *chosen*. It is certainly no small recommendation of this philosophy of the matter, that it accords exactly with the inspired account of the way in which the first sin of man was committed: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof and did eat." If evil were in every possible aspect in which it could be contemplated abhorrent to the mind, or such as could never be chosen, there could be no such thing as a state of probation or moral trial; and a being to whom good and evil were not choosable, wherein would it differ from a being acting from instinct or by constraint? Once admit then—and the denial of this would be a virtual denial of the possibility of moral agency—once admit that evil, or that which law inhibits, is capable of being viewed as desirable, and attend to the fact that its inhibition simply in itself has a tendency to incite the mind to desire it; and there will not appear any incomprehensible mystery in its coming to be actually desired and even chosen. The possibility of perceiving how moral evil originates, should do anything rather than abate our impression of its baneful character. That a thing may be contemplated as

in some respect desirable, does not at all abate the guilt of desiring and choosing it when this is distinctly known to be wrong,—known to be forbidden and abhorred by God our Creator and Sustainer, and hourly Benefactor. That anything should be *chosen* contrary to his declared will implies a most awful and culpable oblivion or disregard of all his incomparable claims. Such knowledge ought to scorch up as instantaneously as the fire of heaven, the first rising of disallowed desire.

The unfallen condition of humanity then was not one in which all thought of evil was as remote from the mind as the antipodes, and as hateful to it as Tartarus; had such been the case man could not have been a moral agent, and would have been entirely incapable of moral character; but quite otherwise was the case, he was so constituted as to be open to impressions inciting to sin, and being placed in contiguity to a forbidden but attractive object, it was ever and anon brought before his mind as an object of thought and desire. Man's original constitution and situation, then, were such as to demand a struggle with such thoughts and feelings, and such as afforded scope for self-denial, unwearied effort, moral courage, and dependence on divine power in suppressing and subduing them; such in fact as made him capable and afforded him the opportunity of acquiring the habits, and reaching the dignity and elevation of a great moral character.

So far of the original condition of human nature in regard to moral agency: its present state we have formerly inquired into at length, both as it is represented in scripture and as it appears in the history of human thought and action. In brief, we have found man wofully insensible to the claims of God,—selfish,

forgetful of what is due to his fellow-men, and apt to do them wrong. To the first most especially of these evils we have found him to have a strong natural tendency, but this, we have remarked, is to be carefully distinguished from sin,—for a tendency, as the word imports, is something which it is possible to withstand; so, on the other hand, a disrelish for duty, however strong, nowise precludes the possibility of performing it, if there be the physical power requisite to this. And have we not the physical capacity of loving, and of loving God? And are we not placed amid the elements which make such a capacity available? Have we not the means of knowing his existence, his attributes, his character? And are we not capable of being awed by what is stupendous, of admiring what is wonderful, and of loving what is good? and thus capable of obeying the Divine injunctions—to "fear the Lord and love him?" We can love only what is loveable; but certainly it will not be denied that God is so, nor affirmed that human nature is incapable of loving him, else he could not be loved by any of mankind. But naturally we are inapt and averse to think of God? And why is it so; have we not power to think of him? May not his character and works be made distinct and intelligible subjects of thought? Can we not inquire concerning him, and will not inquiry and thought find inexhaustible sources of admiration, gratitude, and love? Are not his works above us, around us, and—us ourselves? Is not all that we behold and are—of him? and do not they bear upon them the distinct impresses of his power, his wisdom, and his goodness? And what hinders us any day or hour from being elevated, awed, affected by these? If we are not, can we assign any other cause than want

of thought? Are not wonders inexhaustible, goodness infinite, love immeasurable, open every hour to attention and thought? But it will be objected that the Scriptures represent mankind as spiritually blind, and incapable of perceiving the glory and loveliness of the Divine character. I answer, unhesitatingly, that they do not represent men as by nature wholly so, or universally; on the contrary, they distinctly inform us that, "that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them." That is, not to any select or favoured class of men, but to mankind generally: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations;" thus is indicated the voluntary process by which they became blind—"and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." Again: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." The numerous scripture passages which speak of men as wholly spiritually blind, represent them as becoming so (as in that just cited from Romans) by voluntary personal sin, or exhibit such blindness as a judicial infliction (while it

comes on according to the laws of rational mind when moral influences are not improved but withstood) on account of obstinate intractableness, and continued impenitence. We know the character of God's ancient people—how propense to idolatry—how incorrigible under divine correction and warnings. The message which the prophet received from God to them: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed," is given thus when cited by our Lord: "In them (his countrymen) is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted and I should heal them." What the prophet was commanded by God to do to his countrymen in his days, Christ declares they had done to themselves in his. But how was the prophet to do this? He was to declare to them plainly their sins, and announce the judgments with which they would be visited if they persisted in their evil and impenitent course; and such was the temper of their minds that its effect on them would only be to deaden and to indurate. That their blindness was not owing to the want of power to see, is evident from the way in which similar language is applied to them by God in declaring their character to another prophet: "Son of man, thou dwellest in the

midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they are a rebellious house." It belongs to the constitution of man as a moral agent, that moral motives or suasives operating on the mind, originally produce feeling prompting to act upon them; but when such suasives are disregarded or resisted again and again, the feeling or impulse they produce becomes weaker and weaker, till eventually it dies away altogether; and these suasives, instead of setting in motion the springs of moral action, only tend more and more to deaden them. Motives and persuasives, when yielded to and acted on, tend to produce right moral habits, and to generate and consolidate moral character; but when disregarded or resisted (and surely this is the fault of man) and God still continues to ply men with them, the effect they produce is in the popular style of the Scriptures ascribed to God, inasmuch as he is the author or disposer of the influences which operate on them, and he is said to blind them or to harden their hearts; but at other times these effects are ascribed to themselves, as it is owing to their conduct they are such as they are; had they acted as they ought to have done, these effects might have been quite different, and on this account it is they are chargeable with guilt in regard to them. "Why do ye not understand my speech?" said our Lord to his auditors, "Even because ye cannot hear my word." Not that they had any physical incapacity of hearing,* but because they would not give an unbiassed ear to his teaching, but came with minds full of preju-

* 'Ye cannot hear.' The verb ακουειν, denotes frequently in scripture, and even in profane authors, not barely "to hear," but "to hear patiently."'—Campbell.

dice against him. Blindness in the sense of being unable to see, would, we are taught by the same authority, be incompatible with responsibility. Were men thus spiritually blind, they could not be charged with guilt. "Some of the pharisees said unto him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin."

Then as to our neighbour: the love demanded of us for him is not a love of complacency, for since it is required in regard to men universally, it could not be of this kind unless men were universally good, for it is only goodness that we are commanded or even permitted to look on with complacency; but it is a love of benevolence, and none surely will deny that we are susceptible of such a feeling. And are we not placed amid elements and influences by which we may excite it? Do we not know that our brother whom it is our duty to love, possesses the same nature with ourselves—is the creature of the same God—is placed in the same perilous position—encompassed with similar infirmities—exposed to similar woes—that he acts under the same tremendous responsibility—hopes and trembles in anticipation of an equal immortality; and is not he an object of the tenderest concern and the deepest regard? There is scarcely an individual in whose bosom such feelings are not called forth towards some of his fellow-men in some situation of interest or distress; and might he not by reflection and inquiry find occasions adapted much oftener to call it forth? With just and far-reaching views of the situation and destiny of man, can any human being ever be viewed as *not* an appropriate object of such feelings? But if men have the power of feeling and acting right, why do they so lamentably fail of

doing so ? why is the performance so disproportioned to the power ? In the present state of human nature it is readily allowed that obedience is difficult, in many cases so to a very high degree ; and we have previously seen how the difficulty of obedience arising out of the existing state of human nature, is vastly increased by voluntary thoughtless waywardness and perversity. But in the confession of its difficulty is implied its possibility ; and that which it is possible for us to do it cannot properly be said that we have no power to do. Then, in the ordinary affairs of life, it is allowed on all hands, that men often do wrong when it was in their power to have acted right, and that too when acting right would have been vastly to their advantage. If a high degree of difficulty were not quite compatible with possibility, or if difficulty extinguished responsibility, anything great or noble in the way of moral character would be impossible. Man is responsible for whatever is so dependent on a voluntary state of mind, that without this voluntary state it could not have taken place. If we had such a control over a certain state of mind that it was in our power to have made it different; and if an event was so dependent on that state of mind that it could not have been, had that state been different, is it not clear that for such an event we are responsible ? Responsibility is commensurate with power ; over whatever we have power, however small in regard to that, we are responsible to the extent of our power. And that men are possessed of moral power, is one of the indestructible convictions of the human soul, and can never be disproved so long as the language remains in which these indestructible convictions are embodied. Personal and mutual blame which we have formerly adduced as conclusive proofs

that men do wrong, are no less conclusive proofs that they can do right. If men not only blame themselves and others for committing many evils, but for neglecting to perform many duties or things which they should have done, it certainly is implied that they had power to have performed the things which they blame themselves for not doing; for men do not blame others or themselves for not doing what they have no power to do; indeed they never could do so without an annihilation of all moral perception. It is, to say the least of it, a very questionable mode of magnifying the grace of God, to represent man as in his natural state so utterly imbecile, that he is totally unable to do any thing good, unless impelled to it by a special influence from heaven. Certainly it is little calculated to bring glory to God, to represent him as so treating men as if they were free and responsible, while they can neither do good nor choose it; and as inflicting the most tremendous eternal punishment on them for sinning, when on the theory in question it was utterly impossible for them to cease from doing so.

It is quite possible to contemplate too exclusively the disadvantages and evils of our present state, and to overlook the benefits presented to all, and the sanatory influences brought to bear upon all. It is true that evils of a very serious character have come on all involuntarily, and especially a disposition inclining to omit what is right and do what is wrong; but we should consider that means of a corrective nature, specially adapted to our character and situation, are brought to bear on us in the present constitution of nature and of human society; yet in full harmony with the conditions of moral agency, they are such that they must depend for their efficacy on our voluntary

use and improvement of them. If there is in man a strong predominance of the sensual over the moral and spiritual,—if it is with difficulty he is raised to anything above physical action, or such as is prompted by present circumstances and immediate gratification; it ought to be carefully noted that the present constitution of nature, and the current arrangements of Providence, have a special adaptation (such as could not have been congruous to a state of moral rectitude and purity) to rouse men, and even hedge them up, to entertain and act on moral views and motives, or such as belong to remote and super-sensual results. The husbandman prepares the ground for a crop, but he has to wait many days for the fruit of his skill and labour. Under the expectation of a future good he must deny himself present ease and gratification, while the comparative remoteness, and to a degree uncertainty of the reward, call into exercise patience, and hope, and faith. Similar is the case in regard to the acquisition of useful knowledge, or the attainment of eminence in any business or profession, which in no case can be reached without much self-denial, in regard to what would be immediately grateful to the mind, and subjection to much that is irksome and distasteful. Every occasion indeed which presents to us a remote good, to be obtained by foregoing present gratification, furnishes an opportunity of acquiring moral power. Furthermore: change, suffering, disease, death, tear from us our gratifications, or sever us from them, and furnish a constant succession of incitements and warnings, tending to make us contemplate things under moral aspects, and to act on moral motives. Even the changes of the seasons and the vicissitudes of the weather, disturb our disposition to rest in present ease, and to seek only

present enjoyment. He who subjects himself to no unpleasant toil or inconvenience to make provision for the future, will soon be a poor man. "The sluggard who will not plough by reason of the cold, shall beg in harvest and have nothing." In a word, the succession of nature and the arrangements of Providence, combine in forming one harmonious and unceasing process of moral discipline, admirably adapted to the existing state of human nature, and anxiliary to the scheme of saving mercy, if not rather to be regarded as important parts of its machinery.

Even the defects and evil tendencies of our nature supply peculiar elements and occasions of moral improvement and elevation. It is a mistake to think that we must be free from all propension or tendency to evil in order to be able to act aright. Propension towards what is wrong is not incompatible with acting rightly if it can be overcome; on the contrary, when this is practicable it places within our power the acquiring of higher moral qualities than could have been otherwise acquired. The sense of dangers to be guarded against, and difficulties to be overcome, furnishes powerful motives to constant vigilance and strenuous exertion. Propensions towards evil furnish perpetual occasions for self-denial, and for sacrificing present and sensual gratifications to remote and spiritual considerations. An innate propensity may be no worse to withstand or overcome, than a temptation from without: it may be regarded as, equally with that, —a mode of trial, and an element of moral discipline. Without something to overcome or subdue, there could be no room for moral courage; as without something to suffer, there could be none for fortitude; and without the sense of imperfection and deficiency no stimulus

to improvement; in order even to the possibility of which indeed, these are implied. Even errors, rightly viewed, become warning posts of danger, and supply elements of the wisdom and experience by which their recurrence may be avoided.

But if you claim so much moral power for man, and find so many elements of moral improvement and elevation in his constitution and condition, do you not bring dishonour on, and as it were render useless, the astonishing provisions of the grace of God? Whatever of moral power may be claimed for man, and whatever elements of moral advancement may be regarded as belonging to his condition—the greater these are shown to be—will not his guilt be found the greater if he neglects to use the one, and fails to improve the other; and as the slightest glance over the world is sufficient to convince us how lamentably he does so, is not the grace exhibited as the more illustrious, which has made provision for pardoning *such* guilt? And instead of making the atonement appear the less necessary, does not sin thus voluntary and aggravated make it unspeakably the more so; inasmuch as the more aggravated sin is, the more imperatively must divine justice demand satisfaction. And if it be asked how, with the power of avoiding it, men come to be chargeable universally with such aggravated guilt, let it be considered that without such power they could not be chargeable with guilt at all; disobedience of the Divine commands could not be charged as *sinful* in those who could not do otherwise than disobey them; power to obey does not necessarily involve immediate willingness to do so, *that* the agent may be required to generate, it is sufficient that the reasons are open to attention and inquiry which *should* make him willing.

And, as has been well observed, if Adam sinned though possessing adequate knowledge, and holy inclinations, and when placed in favourable circumstances, it is no wonder if his posterity sin, when inclined to evil, and placed within the sphere of an example, exhibiting far more of evil than of good. If he sinned, who we are certain had full power to have refrained from doing so; surely the sinning of all his descendants cannot be regarded as any proof that they are altogether destitute of such power.

Had man by the fall been reduced as a moral agent to a state of utter imbecility, and had he been exposed to hopeless misery solely in consequence of this imbecility, his deliverance would have been something we might have confidently expected from the Divine compassion, but would have afforded no illustration of sovereign mercy, and no room indeed for its exercise; for mercy has respect not to misery owing to misfortune merely, but to misery combined with and resulting from guilt. Had the condition of man been what we are supposing, it would have been repugnant to all our notions of the divine character, to think that God would have allowed him to perish in it. We could not conceive of His doing so, and yet being the good and compassionate Being which we know he is. But the case is quite different when man becomes guilty and miserable by his own choice; that choice being made in disregard of the Divine goodness, and in voluntary breach of the divine law. It was not, then, because man by his fall had lost all moral power, and was threatened with misery in consequence of this imbecility, that God interposed to rescue him from ruin;—that would have afforded but a faint exhibition of the glory of the Divine character, compared with what is

given in the actual state of the case; but God in infinite love and mercy resolved on man's deliverance, and in his wisdom devised a scheme for accomplishing this, notwithstanding that the whole race was by voluntary choice indulging in a course of sinning against him, or in other words, doing evil when it was in their power to do good. That such was the case, is throughout the whole Scriptures affirmed or implied; on one occasion we are told that "all flesh had corrupted his way;" on another, that "God looked down from heaven on the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek after God; but they were all gone aside, and were together become filthy." Men "when they knew God," we are informed, "glorified him not as God; did not like to retain him in their knowledge, but changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things." But when the punishment, thus so amply deserved, was to be averted from the head of the transgressor; when God had determined to extend mercy to man, the question was irrelevant, whether man might not have acted otherwise than he had done; he must then be viewed, not as he might have been, but as he was; and agreeably to this we find that the main difficulty on the solution of which the Scriptures bear, and for the practical removal of which indeed the redemptive scheme was devised and executed, was not how, with the powers man possessed and the means at his command, man came to sin so grievously, but how was he to be delivered, and sin destroyed? These considerations will, we hope, in the view of the candid reader, fully obviate the objection, that the principles we have been advocating, are calculated to bring dis-

honour on, and exhibit as in great measure unnecessary, the provisions of sovereign grace.

Responsibility, we have already remarked, is coextensive with power; and rightly understood, this is a truth which we conceive lies at the very foundation of moral science. But what is the power with which responsibility is commensurate? Is it, in regard to every act, only what may be possessed when it is performed, or what might have been possessed? Decidedly, we hold, the latter. Men, we conceive, are responsible in regard to every action, not only to the extent of the power they may possess when it is performed, but to the extent of all they might have possessed, by improving all the advantages previously within their reach, and choosing and acting right in all cases where they may have had a choice: so that men are not free from blame in regard to things which it may be beyond their present power to do or avoid, if but for previous misconduct they might have had the requisite power. Were we to hold responsibility to be commensurate only with present power, we should be landed in the conclusion that the greatest and most hardened wickedness had really in it the least of guilt; for it is certain that the more men indulge in evil, their power to do good is proportionately diminished.*

Our Lord's parable of the talents beautifully illustrates the nature of human responsibility. There, while we are taught that men are held responsible, we are also shown that they are furnished with what is requisite to constitute them so,—elements of moral power. These are represented by the talents committed to each, which depend for their original amount

* Note I.

on the wise donation of heaven; but for their improvement, and the measure of it, on the will and exertions of the recipients: "The kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his servants, and delivered unto them his goods. Unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability... He that had received the five talents went and traded with the same and made them other five talents; likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth and hid his Lord's money." Then each was held responsible not merely to the extent of what he had received, but of what he might have made it. While he that had doubled the five talents, and he that had doubled the two, received their lord's high approbation and the apportioned reward; he that had hidden the one in the earth was condemned, not for squandering that which he had received, but for not increasing it: "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with its produce."* Then, the result of failing to improve, was the ultimate loss of what was originally bestowed; moral power can be retained only by being used and turned to account: "Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him who hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

But did not God declare to his ancient people that "if a soul sin, and commit any of these things which

* "With its produce"—not usury, for that is unlawful interest. —Adam Clarke.

are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord; though he wist it not, yet is he guilty and shall bear his iniquity"? And has not our Lord declared that the servant who knew not his Lord's will, and did commit things worthy of stripes, *shall be beaten*, albeit it be "with few stripes"? In regard to the children of Israel, against what was the sin, committed through ignorance, of which they were to be held guilty? It was "against the commandments of the Lord." Had they, or had they not, the means of knowing these? The means of knowing them undoubtedly they had. God publicly promulgated his laws from time to time by his servant Moses:—"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel;—command the children of Israel." Thus invariably ran the Divine message, and it was not neglected by the faithful servant of the Lord: "Moses spake unto the children of Israel according unto all that the Lord had given him commandment unto them: Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them." "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates." Was not ignorance in such circumstances highly culpable? And was it not obviously just to hold him guilty who sinned through it? The parable

of our Lord bears an obvious allusion to the Jewish law which prescribes and limits punishment by the infliction of stripes. It seems most in harmony with its spirit to regard it as intended to represent by the servant who "knew his Lord's will and did it not," those who disregarded a direct revelation from heaven; and him who knew not his lord's will, and yet did commit things worthy of stripes, as representing those who sinned without enjoying such revelation. The responsibility was to be proportioned to the privilege: "To whom much was given, of him should much be required." If the former deserved to be beaten with many stripes, because he disregarded a distinct statement of his lord's will, the latter could not have deserved to have been beaten at all, if it had been utterly beyond his power to have known anything of this will; for "where there is no law there is no transgression." But the Scriptures assure us that none of the race of man are left in such a condition; the servant in question might have learnt his lord's will from his fellow-servant that knew it, and even among those who had no direct revelation from heaven, "God left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness." "The Gentiles who have not the (written) law, are a law unto themselves; who show the works of the law written on their hearts," by the witness of their consciences in their accusing or excusing dictates.

If then, man by his fall has not lost the power of moral choice, nor of self-control, but suffered a derangement of disposition; that being now inclined to evil; and if this disposedness to evil, however strong,

is not originally in any case such as might not be overcome; and if in order to the counteraction of his strong indisposition to moral action and the exercise of the power of self-control, he is placed amid a constitution of things, and under an economy, supplying many and powerful stimulants to these, it cannot be affirmed that the present state of man is incompatible with his being a moral agent.

SUMMARY—CONCLUSION.

We shall now endeavour briefly to indicate the main points evolved in this somewhat elaborate inquiry respecting moral agency, and the powers and condition of man in relation to it. We have found that moral action is action which results from choice,—choice regulated by law given and sanctioned, or believed to be so given, by superior invisible power; freedom to choose, and to act according to choice, being essential to such agency. We have found that free choice and free action are not precluded, nor in any way interfered with, by the Divine foreknowledge, nor by any thing in the nature of the will, nor by the influence of motives and of feelings. We have found that the knowledge on which moral action is specially based, is not that obtained through the medium of the senses, nor by intuition, nor demonstration, but is chiefly presented to us in the form of testimony, and therefore such as may be received or refused—not forcing itself on the acceptance of any, but affording room for choice, and proving a criterion of disposition: That this law,

thus brought before us, is recognized and authenticated by conscience within us, which never sanctions any thing but what is believed to be of Divine authority, and is therefore in all its operations connected with a belief, more or less strong, in invisible power.

In reference to the present character and condition of man as a moral agent, we have found it evinced that all men are sinners; by their mutual charges of guilt, and by the remorse experienced at one time for what may have been done at another. We have seen that there is an inherent derangement in man's disposition, from the strong tendency that appears in him from the first dawn of discriminative power, to prefer the sensible and immediate to the spiritual and remote; while as a moral responsible being he is bound to do the very reverse. While tracing this derangement to the fall of Adam, and finding, according to the constitution of human nature its universality inevitable, we have, notwithstanding, found that constitution capable of the fullest vindication, and of being shown to evince the highest benignity. We have found that the loss sustained by the fall is not a loss strictly of power, but of will or disposition, and that all the elements essential to forming right resolves are within us and around us: that disposition is a thing greatly under our control, inasmuch as the state of feeling in any mind depends much on the views it entertains,—and these are greatly according as it inquires and examines,—and inquiry and examination are voluntary acts; consequently indisposition to fulfil the law neither involves want of power, strictly, nor nullifies the obligation to do so. We have found that whatever evils all men became exposed to by the sin of Adam without any voluntary agency of their own, are obviated, or

to be ultimately repaired to all by Christ, alike independently of their agency; and that provision has been made, adequate to free all from whatever evils they may bring themselves under, or become exposed to, by their own personal transgression,—provision requiring nothing further to render it available, but that it should be voluntarily embraced and duly improved; —that to such, the evils and sufferings of life are converted into elements of moral discipline, and are contributing to enhance the capacity for, and extend the range of, future enjoyment, and death itself is deprived of its sting. Having derived from scripture such views of the substitutionary work and sacrifice of Christ, we found in accordance with them, that thereby the whole human family have been placed under a dispensation of mercy, affording as full an amnesty for transgression, and making as ample provisions of grace, as can at all consist with a condition of moral trial and discipline; consequently that there is no portion of mankind lying under any sentence of condemnation heavier than that of temporal death: that none will be allowed to suffer any greater calamity, but such as bring themselves under it by voluntary obstinate transgression. In order to show that man's present condition is consistent with his being a moral agent, we have contrasted it with his original state, and have found that neither could the one have been so wholly happy, nor can the other be so utterly disastrous (viewed apart from what he may voluntarily make it) as is generally imagined; as the evils and the tendencies to evil in his present moral state are met by powerful counteractives, not only in the special economy of grace, but in the whole machinery of Providence, and the existing constitution of nature.

Reader, are you living in gaiety and spiritual unconcernedness? are you pursuing pleasure without thinking or inquiring about duty? And do you flatter yourself that all is right because you are free from all flagrant vice, and thus better than many you see around you? Do you think then that you were brought into existence and constituted as you are, merely to enjoy yourself and pursue your own gratification, and that you could be charged with nothing blameworthy, if you kept yourself free from every thing popularly deemed immoral or disgraceful? And have you really never awakened to a sense of what constitutes the great distinction of your being? have you never reflected on, and felt in all its practical importance, the truth, that while like the ground you tread on, the plants it supports, and the animals that range on it, you are what you are *involuntarily* as to physical constitution, you yet take rank essentially with an incomparably higher order of being, inasmuch as your state in regard to dignity or meanness, happiness or misery, *will be for ever according as you choose.* Have you never reflected that, as a moral agent, you are under the most solemn obligations to make a choice, between what may be for your immediate gratification, and what the divine law requires? Have you never endeavoured to ascertain whether there be any discrepancy between what you delightedly pursue and its requirements? Have you never reflected, that, as it enjoins a supreme regard to spiritual objects, and the bliss of an undisclosed futurity, while you are inclined habitually to neglect these, and to pursue immediate gratification, there likely is, there cannot but be, such a discrepancy? Does not the law require you to love the Lord your God with your

whole soul, and strength ? and do you ever think even of the claims he has to your love ? Do you ever gratefully and with delight remember that you derive your existence from Him, and that you are daily sustained and protected by his providence, and owe to him all the means and sources of enjoyment ? Or is it true that you scarcely ever direct your mind to such considerations, that you habitually allow yourself to forget him, "in whom you live and move and have your being," permitting your mind to be engrossed with the merest trifles, and the most evanescent pleasures ; while you have never made his claims an element of your consideration—have hardly ever adverted to them at all. What would you think of yourself if you had so treated an earthly benefactor, from whom you had not received even the thousandth part of the favours ? you would be utterly ashamed to be found destitute of all sense of obligation in the one case ; what do you think of being found destitute of all sense of infinitely higher obligation in the other ? Do you not see yourself wanting in the affections most emphatically proper to your condition and capabilities ? do you not perceive that you have never opened your heart to the highest and most ennobling range of feeling,—that in fact you have been failing of the highest purpose of your being,—have been degrading yourself to the level of the irrational animals ; that though constituted a moral agent, you have not been exercising the powers of such an agent; but have been utterly neglecting the duties arising out of your relation to your Creator and moral Governor, as well as failing to exercise that self-denial and self-control which moral agency involves in its very essence ? Do you perceive that hitherto you have acted unworthy of your nature, and resolve from

henceforth to commence a new course,—to inquire what God claims of you, to act agreeably to the requirements of his law, and not merely on the stimulus of your fleshly nature? In this you do well. It certainly is what you ought to do. But if it is what you ought to do now, it is more; it is what you ought always to have done. And if you have neglected to do what you ought always to have done,—what it was in your power to have done,—and what you were under the most solemn obligations at all times to do, have you not incurred guilt, and guilt long accumulating? And how is this guilt to be cancelled? If the law ever demands obedience to the full amount of your strength, you can never produce any supererogatory merit to set against your former deficiencies, though that were available. Unrelaxing in its demands, the law is strong only to condemn; its declaration is—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." What course then remains for you but to cast yourself on the Divine mercy, and accept of that pardon which is offered you through the substitutionary sacrifice of God's own Son, or perish. Will you choose to perish when salvation is within your reach, when there is nothing on the part of God, nothing in his whole creation, save what may be within your own heart, hindering you from being saved? Will you choose immediate gratification, as it were but for an hour, though conscious that it involves the loss of eternal joy, and the certainty of eternal woe? If you are not prepared for an issue so fatally disastrous, escape for your life now; there is increasing danger in every hour's delay. "Now is the accepted time, NOW is the day of salvation." "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou

shalt be saved." But perhaps you are one of those whose perverted notions of the Divine administration furnish them with an excuse for neglecting their duty: 'I cannot believe of myself, and God is Sovereign in the bestowment of spiritual blessings.' You cannot believe of yourself; but when were you ever left to yourself? You could not believe if God had given no testimony; but has he not given one of the most explicit character? and is not this in your hands? Are you perusing it with that solemn and earnest attention which a message from God to you demands? You could not confide in him if he had given you no means of ascertaining whether his character is worthy of confidence;—has he left you entirely without such means? Nay, he never so left any of our race, (Acts xiv. 17.) how much less you. Are you then using the multiplied means at your command for ascertaining whether his character be worthy of confidence—that confidence which is involved in believing? If you are not, is it any wonder that you cannot believe? Or need the fact be regarded as anywise mysterious, when there is so obvious a cause, in your own criminal neglect of all the means with which God has furnished you, of becoming acquainted with his character?

But you say, God is sovereign in the bestowment of spiritual blessings. What do you mean by this—that man having rendered himself wholly unworthy of such blessings, the purpose to bestow them springs from God's free love and good pleasure alone? This is a glorious truth, but by itself not relevant to your purpose at all. But in addition to this, by pleading that God is sovereign in the bestowment of spiritual blessings, do you mean, that, in every case he bestows them on whom he pleases, and when he pleases, irrespective

of anything in the state of mind, or in the conduct of the recipients? If such were indeed the true state of the case, nothing could become you so much as to sit still and wait, or rather, to pursue your own pleasure, and give yourself no concern about the matter; and no doctrine could be more convenient for one who wished to be freed from a painful sense of neglected duty, and consequent deep responsibility; for under this view of the economy of salvation, no obligation could be felt on the neglect of which conscience could found a charge. But is this view a just one? Does the Divine testimony warrant our entertaining it? Founded on a one-sided interpretation of a few isolated texts, does it not nullify the innumerable earnest and most moving appeals which God makes to sinners—to the unconverted, to "turn," to "turn from their wicked ways and live;" to "repent," and to "believe"? In promising spiritual blessings, God invariably demands a state of mind and conduct appropriate to their reception. If the proper state of mind is cultivated, and the prescribed conduct pursued, the appropriate spiritual blessings are promised without exception or reserve: the knowledge of God, if we follow on to know him; victory over Satan, if we resist him; over sin, if we mortify the deeds of the body; over the world, if we live by faith; salvation, if we believe; the Holy Spirit, if we ask him; final triumph, if we endure to the end. Is this teaching salvation by the works of the law, whereof we may boast and glory? Nay, verily. All these blessings are brought before us by the grace of God, and in the exercise of that grace,—infinite wisdom adapting its provisions to the exigencies of our moral being and condition,—are connected in their bestowment with the state of mind, and the

conduct appropriate to their reception. You may safely calculate on whatever benefits are connected with duty by Divine promise, if in a spirit of humble dependence, you attend to the requisite duties; but if you sit still and presume on any exercise of undisclosed sovereignty, you incur the most awful risk of irremediable ruin. Let it be true that God in an extraordinary manner calls one here and another there, from the crowds of the unthinking, the deluded, or the vicious, and makes them witnesses for him, and agents in carrying on his work, in the midst of an alienated world. But the rareness of such cases makes it fearfully improbable, in regard to any individual, that he shall be thus arrested and saved; and of all conceivable cases, yours is surely the most hopeless (if I should not rather say entirely so) who are knowingly neglecting that way in which salvation is revealed as sure. Instead of indulging such perilous presumption, ought you not rather to bethink yourself of your awful guilt, accumulating every hour, while "you thus neglect so great salvation." The mode in which he may exercise his sovereignty, God necessarily keeps secret; for to reveal how he would act in such cases, would obviously nullify sovereignty, as it would limit him to the specified mode. It is not for us to limit God, in regard to the modes in which he may apprehend those "on whom he will have mercy," amid the multitudes who despise or neglect his grace; but the revealed mode in which deliverance is to be obtained, and our duty in regard to it, is clear: "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH in him should not perish, but have everlasting life:" "Justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;

whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;.....that he might be just and the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." And as he "gave himself a ransom for all," and God "will have all men to be saved," the reason why any perish is equally clear: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."

But possibly you may yet object,—'Hath not God declared, that he "will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and that whom he will he hardeneth;" and can I believe or be saved if he withhold from me his grace?' But on whom will God have mercy? will he not on every one who comes to him pleading —"God be merciful to me a sinner?" Has he not said, "Come unto me whomsoever will; and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out"? Did he not give his Son to be a "propitiation for the sins of the whole world?" And did not that Son, thus given by the Father, give "himself a ransom for all?" And has not God offered salvation to all? Has he not declared in the strongest terms, and manifested in the most affecting manner, the earnestness of his desire, that all should accept of it? And in what light would it exhibit his character to us if he did so, while he knew, that in the case of thousands, acceptance was no way within their power,—while he had determined to withhold from them that, without which they never possibly could accept of it? Will you question the sincerity of God in these offers and ap-

peals ? Abhorred be the thought ! " Let God be true, and every man a liar." Who are they whom God hardeneth,—whom " he giveth over to a reprobate mind " ? Are they not those who " do not like to retain him in their knowledge ;" those whom he has " endured with much long-suffering," fitted and intended to " lead them to repentance ;" but who instead of being so led thereby, have despised " the riches of his goodness and forbearance," and in the indulgence of the hardness and impenitence of their hearts have become " fitted to destruction," having treasured up to themselves " wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ? " And wherefore was it that Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, attained not to it? " Because they sought it not by faith." Those strong declarations respecting the Divine Sovereignty which the apostle introduces in the 9th chapter of Romans, have an evident bearing and reference (as shewn by the contextual argument) towards the reverse of that for which they are very often now cited. Instead of being there exhibited as the reason of the limitation of grace, God's sovereignty is adduced as the ground and reason for its unrestricted and expansive freeness. His argument is, that the being of the " seed of Abraham " nowise of itself involved the certainty of spiritual blessings or of eternal salvation ;—that God was not withheld by any stipulations of his covenant with the Jewish people, either from quickening or from hardening whom he would,—that their privileges neither involved the limitation of his grace to them, nor precluded him from visiting their sins with appropriate punishment ; " he hath called not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles ;" " he hath mercy on whom

he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* But so far from any restriction of the fulness of the invitation and promise, "Come unto me, whomsoever he will, and him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out," being involved in the declaration, "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy," it really expresses the superabundance of his grace beyond all that is implied in even these: "I was found of them that sought me not; I was made manifest to them that asked not after me." The notion that God arbitrarily withholds his grace from any is both unscriptural and of most hurtful tendency; we ought to settle it in our minds as a fundamental principle, that God never withholds his grace but in cases where its bestowment would be unsuitable, or incompatible with the principles of his moral government. God offers, yea presses on the acceptance of sinners, the blessings of pardon and reconciliation, and holds out to them the means of spiritual renovation; and they heed not, or contemn his offers. If such remain unsaved, where is the propriety of saying that it is owing to God's withholding his grace? He has declared to them their danger in the most impressive and awful language! he has depicted that misery to which they are hastening, in every variety of the most appalling colours! in his providence they ever and anon have warnings of his displeasure; yet still blended with intimations of mercy and the attractions of a winning love; yet day after day, season after season, and year after year, they pursue their own way heedless of all these, and of every claim of his to their regard, though these were presenting themselves at every turning, and every

* Note K.

step of their way. Still, notwithstanding all their provocations, God waits to be gracious, stretches out his hand though no man regards, strives by his Spirit to reclaim them, expostulating with them, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die? As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." How can it be said that God withholds from such his grace, when, in disregard or contempt of all entreaty they obstinately refuse to repair to the channels in which it flows? Is there no grace displayed in the substitution of Christ for all mankind,—in his enduring for us the curse and despising the shame,—no grace in the written revelation of mercy,—none in the institution of the ministry of reconciliation,—none in the universal offer of pardon, and of the Spirit, to them that ask him? 'Surely,' every right-hearted man will reply, 'they are all of grace.' Then there is no restriction or withholding in regard to these,—the grace that is in them "hath appeared unto all men."* If the grace already communicated be improved for the end for which it was given, more will not be withheld. If the sinner is impelled by the warnings of danger to seek for the way of escape, that way is opened up; and if he essays to betake himself to it and walk therein, but feeling his own weakness and the prevailing power of corruption, implores heavenly strength, that strength will be communicated; and if duly improved and depended on, he will go on his way rejoicing, filled with all joy and peace in believing. But where would be the propriety or wisdom of pardoning the sins of those who do not see that they have any sins

* Note L.

to pardon, or who do not desire to be delivered from their sins, or who consider them so venial that pardon is of little importance? Or, how could they be gladdened with the manifestation of that love which God bears to his chosen, who remain insensible and unmoved under all the displays of his compassion for sinners; or what other than misery would a sense of the divine indwelling Presence be to him who does not "like even to retain God in his knowledge." If it must be said, that, in not communicating blessings like these to such persons, God withholds from them his grace, he needs not be represented as doing so in the exercise of any inscrutable sovereignty. Neither is it much in harmony either with the general strain of scripture, or the Divine commands to the Church, to represent it as a remarkable display of the Divine Sovereignty that God has given the Gospel to some nations and withheld it from others. God has withheld the Gospel from none: Christ commanded his disciples to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." The instrumentality which God in his infinite wisdom has seen meet to employ in the communication of the "glad tidings" of salvation "to all people," is the church, and if she neglect her duty, if her tongue is silent, there is no other to take up and proclaim abroad the "joyful sound."*

But it is possible for some reader so far to pervert the principles we have been endeavouring to establish, as to say, 'Yes, I see I have power to do everything required of me; my proper business is not to be always imploring Divine help, but to employ and improve to the utmost the powers I possess.' I grant it, that if

* Note M.

you had fulfilled the law in all points from your youth up, it were needless, and would certainly be irrelevant, for you to pray for mercy. But even if this had been the case, (which I am nowise expecting you are prepared to maintain) because you were not in a condition requiring this particular blessing, would it follow from hence that there was no necessity for your cherishing an habitual sense of dependence on God, and filial desire for his direction and support. It is only when such a sense of dependence is cherished, that the law *can* be fulfilled; devoid of this the heart must be in a state at variance with the entire spirit of the law, and quite incongruous to the situation of any dependent creature. Every element and condition of a state of moral trial is adapted to cherish such a feeling: temptation leads the tempted to seek Almighty support and defence; danger prompts to seek the shield of an unfailing protection; the future issue in an ultimate deliverance and reward, calls into exercise faith and hope. Indeed, a being in a state of moral probation, who is striving to fulfil the law, devoid of a sense of humble dependence on Divine wisdom and strength, is already fallen; his heart is already tainted with the essence of all sin. There could not be a being, even in a state of unfallen probation, for whom it would not be proper and becoming to pray, "Deliver me from evil:" "Send forth thy light and thy truth; let them lead me and guide me." An unconfessed impression seems prevalent, that strenuous efforts in working out our own salvation, or in fulfilling the requirements of the Divine law, are incompatible with dependence on God. But no impression could well be more unfounded or pernicious. So far from this being the case, exertion is the only condition of a moral agent

in which dependence can be properly exercised. To remain inactive and expect that God will do all for us, is not to depend but to presume. Exertion and dependence should be correspondent and reciprocal: our exertions can never be too great, if our dependence be commensurate with them; nor our dependence too great, if our exertions be in proportion.

The state of feeling, then, which you have expressed would be quite unsuitable even for an unfallen moral agent. But is this your character? I do not suppose you will maintain that it is. If you habituate yourself at all to serious reflection and self-questioning, you must be conscious that you have often forgotten how much you owe to God, and have lamentably failed in yielding the gratitude due to him for all his benefits, and that you have been guilty of many sins besides. The "wages of sin" then, you know, "is death;" and if you obtain not the pardon of your sin, this is a retribution which no effort of yours can avert. But can you expect to obtain pardon, or are you indeed in a state of mind in which it would be of any practical value to you, if you do not desire it? And, though it be not in a strict sense impossible for you to yield all that is demanded of you, yet as you are conscious of having lamentably failed hitherto in this respect, what ground of assurance have you that you shall exercise unremitting vigilance, and maintain unyielding firmness for the future? But it *is* impossible if you look solely to yourself, if you trust only in your own heart; —that is a state of mind in which the law never yet was fulfilled, and never can be; for it is itself, as we have just observed, a state utterly at variance with the spirit of the law. You are fulfilling the law only when you are contending against sin and pursuing duty, depend-

ing on Divine support; for while it is declared that "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," we are commanded to "trust in the Lord *for ever*, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." And whatever might be the economy under which beings in a state of unfallen probation would subsist and act, you are placed under one, by the institutes of which you are instructed, that all its special benefits are to be asked in order to be obtained or enjoyed. The cultivation of an abiding sense of dependence on the Divine mercy and goodness, of an habitual spirit of prayerfulness, is indeed an essential part of your duty, entering into the very essence of that holiness which you are sedulously to cultivate and fervently to aspire after. Besides, is not success in everything we undertake, intimately connected with the blessing of God? Is it not by his favour that you prosper, and are you not commanded to acknowledge him in all your ways? And are there not a thousand points at which the Divine agency daily touches your course? and may it not in innumerable instances, though imperceptibly, do so for your good in answer to prayer?

And, after all, the universalist may step forward and say: 'I am glad to perceive you have advanced more than half way toward us; proceed on your hopeful course; you cannot find firm footing till you come over altogether to the ground we have taken.' If there be any disposed thus to address us, we would say to such, Do not triumph ere you be sure you have cause; we have not advanced towards your principles at all. Those we have been endeavouring to establish, if properly viewed, will appear much rather a recession from yours. On the ground of the substitution of Christ you hold out to all indiscriminately the prospect of

final blessedness; while the views of the influence of his work brought forward in this treatise, derive a main portion of their importance, from the principle held in connexion with them; that on our voluntary choice and consequent conduct here, is suspended our eternal destiny. We hold, and have endeavoured to show, that an indissoluble connection between conduct and destiny, is an essential element of any system of moral being, and something without which moral government were impossible. We believe that God has placed before our race, "life and good, death and evil," and plied us with motives to make us choose life, while everlasting happiness or woe must be our portion *according as we choose;* while your principles invest the choice and the perpetration of evil with comparative impunity. In showing that salvation is brought within the reach of all—that all obstructions to it, in regard to the whole race, are removed, except such as they themselves voluntarily raise—and that innumerable appliances are constantly at work for beating down even these, we manifest the justness of their condemnation, who obstinately refuse to accept of the proffered deliverance; while in maintaining that God makes no requirement of any man but what he has given power to fulfil, or furnished with the means of acquiring such power, we vindicate the justice of God in punishing those who fail to yield to the amount of his requirements, and at the same time contemn the grace which offers pardon for delinquencies. While we vindicate the glory of Christianity, as embodying a free provision for cancelling every form and measure of human guilt, we rejoice unspeakably in perceiving that this may be done in consistency with a system of moral agency, and a process of moral dis-

cipline, seeing the provisions of Divine mercy cannot be available for removing the guilt of any one unless embraced by his own choice.

Reader, you have now been led, with however imperfect and erring a guidance, through some of the labyrinths of a difficult field of inquiry; yet you will remember that your attention has been called to what is no foreign, and should be to you no uninteresting theme; seeing your own powers, capacity, and responsibilities are the objects it embraces. With respect to a subject of such importance and interest, see to it that no error you may apprehend in the present essay, prejudice you against the inquiries with which it is occupied. Pursue these for yourself; then will you bring good even out of the mistakes and failures of the present writer, making them beacons of warning, and stimulants to farther scrutiny.

And now, as this essay is come to its close, and as the only opportunity which the writer may ever have of influencing you the reader, may be that afforded him through the medium of these pages, suffer him to ask affectionately, and with all the earnestness which such a solemn question warrants, whether you feel yourself a sinner, and are valuing and resting on the mercy of God, as manifested and made available for us, by the substitution of his Son. If you are, has your sense of obligation and responsibility as a moral agent (sinful, yet the recipient of immeasurable grace) been at all cleared or deepened by the perusal of this treatise? Has it led you to feel any more keenly, how evil a thing and bitter sin is, committed by a being of such powers and privileges, against a God of such benignity and grace? Has it tended in any

measure to enhance your estimate of the intensity of that love which could prompt the Godhead to devise and consummate such an atonement for sin,—an atonement not only sufficient to cancel the guilt of the original transgression, but of all other sins,—opening a fountain of grace for the whole human family, limited by nothing but the failure of penitent hearts to receive it. If such have been at all the case, the writer will rejoice. If such have been at all the case, you will not rest satisfied with a mere deliverance from condemnation,—with merely planting your feet within the confines of the region of safety; you will press on to a grateful service and obedience. "The love of Christ" constraining you to live, not to yourself, "but to him who died for you, and rose again." You will not be content with the presumed possession of an inoperative faith; but knowing that faith without works is dead, you will not only "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," in dependence on God working in you, but strive to gain others to him, labouring in your humble sphere to hasten that period, when he shall receive the homage of a renovated world. Still in all humility having respect to the joy set before you, pressing on to victory, contending for the prize, your mind tempered with a salutary fear lest at last you should fail or come short; knowing that it is only to Him that overcometh, the crown of life is given; and that though the reward is all of grace, it is a reward for service rendered, and in proportion to it, and that where there is no service there can be no reward.

But is the case otherwise with you? Do you live unheedful of the claims God has on you, not grateful for the benefits of which you are the recipient, insen-

sible to your situation as a moral being; unconcerned at being in the most imminent risk of losing all that gives to existence its value, and futurity its hope; unalarmed at the guilt you are contracting, and at what, if you continue as you are, must be your final doom? Have you perused the present treatise merely as bringing before you matters of curious speculation, and without feeling that it contains anything in which you have a personal interest? The state of your mind, then, is one calculated to excite the deepest commiseration. You are hastening on to the final audit utterly unprepared, or prepared only for condemnation, and the society of the lost. And what excuse can be pleaded for you? You have suffered by the fall, it is true; by it you endure some evils, and became exposed to the most tremendous. But more than you lost in Adam it is within your power to regain by Christ; and you can fail to do so only by refusing what is pressed on your acceptance. No sentence of hopeless reprobation impends over you; for no such sentence impends over any, unless they bring themselves under it by continued rebellion, and obstinate rejection of heavenly grace. That dissolution of your being to which you became liable by the sin of Adam shall not be permanent; your body will be "ransomed from the power of the grave;" and will you by your own voluntary impenitence and transgression make yourself liable to the "second death," from which there can be no deliverance? You breathe as it were an atmosphere of mercy. You are surrounded with the appliances of a dispensation of infinite grace. God's own word,—his message of reconciliation,—is in your hands daily; his ministers are beseeching you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to him, the Spirit is striving with you, the

events of Providence and the very elements of nature combine alternately to warn and to win. What shall be said of you; what hope can remain for you, if you withstand all these—despise all these? Having remained unmoved and obdurate under all the appliances of Divine compassion,—having exhausted the enduring even of Divine forbearance, what can remain for you but "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation."

Put not off concern then to the time when concern will be inevitable, for then though the most profound will certainly be felt, it will be of no avail. Think how intensely repugnant to the state of feeling in the Divine mind regarding you, is, what you may deem mere innocent thoughtlessness respecting these things. God is manifesting the deepest compassion for you, and a concern for your impending fate, which no words nor signs can adequately express, and heedless of all the moving expressions and displays of these, you are pursuing your own wayward course,—thus putting contempt on His most profound sympathies, who is the Author and Sustainer of your being. His voice is now lifted up in solemn remonstrance, in earnest entreaty, and gracious proffer;—"Turn you at my reproof; behold I will pour out my Spirit upon you, I will make known my words unto you." But you are forewarned that a time is coming when he will treat those who disregard his voice in a very different manner,—"Because I have called and ye have refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. Ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof. I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear

cometh. . . . For that they *hated* knowledge, and *did not choose* the fear of the Lord : therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices."

NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

"If you are not a thinking man, to what purpose are you a man at all?"—Coleridge.

"In the whole conduct of the understanding, there is nothing of more moment than to know when, and where, and how far to give assent, and possibly there is nothing harder."—Locke.

NOTE A. p. 34.

THE ARGUMENT FROM DESIGN.

The reaction in favour of a spiritual philosophy, from a former prevalent materialism, is now setting in so strongly, that some, even Christian theists, are showing a disposition to discredit, or abandon as insufficient, the argument for the being and attributes of God, drawn from the design and skill displayed in the works of nature. This, to say the least of it, is certainly a very needless and unwise concession to atheism. In a page subsequent to that from which this note is referred to, I have endeavoured to place this argument on its proper basis, by distinguishing between necessary and established relations and laws, and showing that it is in the latter, and not in the former, that the marks of intelligence are to be found. Atheistical writers confound these, and the Christian theists in question seem to fall into a similar error. Necessity is independent of design, will, or power, but arrangement and adaptation obviously involve all these. Let as much as may in the existing system of the planetary and sideral heavens be shown to be necessarily involved in the laws of gravitation and motion, yet while organic nature remains, exhibiting myriads of wondrous forms produced from a few simple ele-

ments, showing endless variety, yet the most beautiful systematic arrangements, the proof of the existence of an intelligent Creator, is certainly full and invulnerable.

NOTE B. p. 41.

The quotation inserted and discussed in the text, is from 'Cousin's Analysis of the Will,' a piece of philosophical investigation, which, though marred by the error there adverted to, as well as by that involved in affirming the necessity of the acts of intelligence, displays in the main much analytic skill, and is characterized by an intelligibleness and distinctness which contrast favourably with the hopeless mysticism of some of the author's other speculations.

For those who have not seen the article, I transcribe the concluding portion of it which may afford a pretty accurate idea of the general strain of the whole.

'The whole action which we undertook to analyze, is resolved into three elements perfectly distinct. 1. The intellectual element, which is composed of the motive for and against, of deliberation, of preference, of choice. 2. The voluntary element, which consists entirely in an internal act, namely, the resolution to do. 3. The physical element, or external action.

'If these three elements exhaust action, that is to say, the phenomenon in which we have recognized the characteristic of liberty in opposition to the phenomena of intelligence and of sensation; it is now the question to determine precisely, in which of these

three elements we are to find liberty, that is to say, the power to do, with the consciousness of being able not to do. Is this power to do, with the consciousness of the power not to do, to be found in the first element, the intellectual element of free action? No: for it is not in the power of man to judge that one motive is preferable to another; we are not masters of our preferences; we prefer one motive to another on this side, or that, according to our intellectual nature, which has its necessary laws, without having the consciousness of being able to prefer or to judge differently, and even with the consciousness of being unable not to prefer and to judge as we actually do. It is not then in this element that we are to seek for liberty, neither is it in the third element, in the physical act, for this act supposes the external world, an organization which corresponds to it; and in this organization a muscular system, sound and appropriate, without which the physical act is impossible. When we accomplish this, we are conscious of acting, but on condition of a theatre which is not at our disposal, and of instruments which are imperfectly at our disposal, which we can neither restore, if they leave us,—and they may leave us at any moment,—nor set in order if they become deranged, and deceive us, and which often do deceive us, and obey their own peculiar laws, over which we have no power, and with which we are scarcely acquainted: whence it follows, that we do not act here with the consciousness of being able to do the opposite of that which we do. It is not then in this third element, any more than in the first, that we are to look for liberty; it can only be in the second, and there in fact we find it.

'Neglect the first, and the third element, the judg-

ment and the physical act, and let the second element, the will, subsist alone; analysis discovers two terms still in this single element, namely, a special act of will, and the power of will within us to which we refer this act. This act is an effect in relation to the power of will, which is the cause of it; and this cause, in order to produce its effect, needs no other theatre and no other instrument than itself. It produces it directly, without any medium or condition; it continues and completes it, or suspends and modifies it, or alters it entirely, or destroys it entirely; and at the very moment when it exercises itself by a special act of any kind, we have the consciousness that it could exercise itself by a special act of a quite contrary kind, without any obstacle, without exhausting itself by such action, so that after having changed its acts a hundred times, the faculty remains absolutely the same, inexhaustible and identical with itself, in the perpetual variety of its applications, always being able to do what it does not do, and not to do what it does. Here then in all its perfection, is the characteristic of liberty.' *

On these views, in addition to what has been said elsewhere, I may just add here, that the resolution to do an action, or the act of willing, results from the perception that it is proper or desirable to be done, or from the feeling of obligation, that it ought to be done, or from both combined; but neither the sense of fitness, nor the feeling of obligation can arise without a

* I have inserted these paragraphs here, that the reader may have an opportunity of seeing in their connexion various statements and opinions embodied in them, which are introduced into, and commented on in the text, and thus have the better opportunity of judging of the justness of the strictures there offered.

perception of the reasons for doing the action which this sense and feeling have respect to ; and a comprehensive view of these reasons again can only be obtained by the voluntary application of the mind in attention and inquiry. In a rational and moral agent who regulates his conduct by reason and conscience, the nature or kind of his resolves or the acts of his will, are anything but arbitrary or independent of the acts of intelligence and the feeling of obligation ; and we could not have the consciousness that the will at the very moment when it exercises itself by a special act of any kind, could without any obstacle, exercise itself by a special act of " a quite contrary kind," for there are the powerful obstacles of the sense of fitness, and the feeling of obligation. Thus at the moment of forming a resolution in accordance with these, the forming of a contrary one must be both irrational and immoral, not merely this, but the *conscious* resolving irrationally and immorally, and the liberty to resolve and act thus, is but the liberty to resolve and act as a madman and a fiend ; if in this and this alone, consists the liberty of man, from such a liberty we may devoutly pray, " Good Lord deliver us ! "

NOTE C. p. 51.

In saying in the text that Coleridge has gone astray in his attempts to discriminate between understanding and reason, I might have expressed what I meant more accurately, by saying that I conceived he had failed chiefly in his attempt to assign the nature and functions of the latter. Harmonizing in the main

with Cousin and writers of that school, Coleridge regards reason as the faculty in man which apprehends or rather imbodies super-sensual truth, " reason is the power of universal and necessary convictions, the source and substance of truths above sense, and having their evidence in themselves." For the reason thus regarded, a far higher sphere and functions are claimed, than are assigned by Butler and his school to " the principle of reflection or conscience," a rule and monitor of right in matters of conduct. Coleridge following Kant, assigns to reason a two-fold form, the speculative and the practical. " We consider one and the same gift now as the ground of formal principles, and now as the origin of ideas. Contemplated distinctively in reference to formal (or abstract) truth, it is the speculative reason ; but in reference to actual (or moral) truth, as the fountain of ideas, and the light of conscience, we name it the practical reason ;" even this last, as will be clearly seen, comprehends much more than the ' reflection or conscience ' of Butler. Now, had not those who regard human nature as possessed of such a power, better call it at once the spiritual sense, or spiritual intuition; or by some other better name if they can devise it, and avoid much obscurity and confusion (of which there are abundance connected with the subject at the least) occasioned by designating it by a term long, by general consent, appropriated to a power altogether different. If they regard it as a mental faculty, let them give it a name corresponding to what they deem its nature; and if they consider it a supernatural or superhuman principle, let them call it by the ' divine light ' of the Quakers, or any other unambiguous designation they please.

I subjoin in the form Coleridge has given it, his description of Understanding and Reason, each by its characteristic qualities; and let the reader try what he can make out of it.

UNDERSTANDING.	REASON.
1. Understanding is discursive.	1. Reason is fixed.
2. The understanding in all its judgments refers to some other faculty as its ultimate authority.	2. The reason in all its decisions appeals to itself as the ground and *substance* of their truth. (Heb. vi. 13.)
3. Understanding is the faculty of reflection.	3. Reason of contemplation. Reason indeed is much nearer to sense than to understanding: for reason (says our great Hooker) is a direct aspect of truth, an inward beholding, having a similar relation to the intelligible or spiritual, as sense has to the material or phenomenal.

The result is, that neither falls under the definition of the other. They differ *in kind*.

Aids to Reflection, p. 163.

NOTE D. p. 61.

I have not made any special reference to Bishop Butler in the text, but the view of conscience cited and commented on in the part referred from, is essentially his; and a reperusal of his Three Sermons on Human Nature, has suggested a few remarks on the functions and capabilities claimed by him for conscience. These remarks are submitted with considerable diffidence, and with the most profound respect and admiration for the high and varied merits of this distinguished ethical philosopher.

The fundamental error of the system of Butler and those who follow him, seems to be the placing of what he calls the constitution of human nature, or what he holds to be the governing principle there 'reflection or conscience,' in the place of the rule of right or moral law; whereas conscience is only the power in the mind, constituted and adapted to recognize this law, and maintain its authority.

"From all these things put together," says he in his Third Sermon, "nothing can be more evident than that exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness happen to carry him, which is the condition brute creatures are in, but that *from his make, constitution, or nature, he is, in the strictest and most proper sense, a law to himself.* He has the rule of right within: what is wanting, is only that he honestly attend to it.' * 'Allowing that

* Butler's Fifteen Sermons, p. 25. Tegg's Edition, 1836.

mankind hath the rule of right within himself, yet it may be asked, 'What obligations are we under to attend and follow it?' I answer, it has been proved, that man by his nature is a law to himself, without the particular distinct consideration of the positive sanctions of that law; the rewards and punishments which we feel, and those which from the light of reason we have ground to believe are annexed to it. The question then carries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature.' Here there seems something like a confounding of the law or principle of conscience, with organic law, as if not merely the power of making moral distinctions, but the knowledge of the moral character of actions were an essential element of our being. Not only the existence of this power, but its right exercise, and the maintenance of its authority, are spoken of as essential to the constitution of human nature. "Every man in his physical nature, is one individual single agent. He has likewise properties and principles, each of which may be considered separately, and without regard to the respects they have to each other. Neither of these are the nature we are taking a view of. But it is the inward frame of man, considered as a *system or constitution;* whose several parts are united, not by a physical principle of individuation, but by the respect they have to each other; the chief of which is the subjection which the appetites, passions, and particular affections have to the supreme principle of reflection or conscience. *The system, or constitution, is formed by, and consists in these respects and this subjection.*' * But is the constitution of

* Note to Sermon 3. pp. 25, 26. The italics in the last sentence are the present writer's.

human nature dissolved? does it cease to be human nature when this order is violated? If its constitution were 'formed by, and consisted in these respects, and this subjection,' then of necessity this constitution would be at an end, when the appetites or passions rebelled against conscience, and the different parts of man's inner frame ceased to bear the proper relation to each other. Were this indeed the case, however, we fear there would be little of human nature now to be found in the world. Here, as in the other instances cited, has the philosopher been misled by a confusion of the law of conscience with an organic principle. *The law of conscience is not properly the law of our nature but of our life.* The infringement of this law is not the breaking up of man's constitution, but the violation of his character. A man does not cease to be a man, when he acts in opposition to conscience; but to be a *good* man.

The system of Butler, moreover, exhibits but a loose notion of what conscience really is: he speaks of it generally as the principle of reflection or conscience. But reflection has a much wider range than conscience, even in regard to conduct. A person may have been guilty of a violation of a moral precept, and when he thinks of what he has done, he experiences a feeling of deep remorse, and severely blames himself for his conduct; at another time he may have violated some of the conventional proprieties of social life, and when he thinks of it, he experiences a keen sense of shame and self-reproach: the feelings in both cases are the result of reflection, but we could not say that the self-reproach in the latter case was the voice of conscience, as we would say it was in the former. That which an individual experiences in the one case,

is as much a sense of shame, as it is a sense of guilt in the other; yet would the shame have ever been felt, had he not learned that to be a branch of social etiquette which he had violated ?

NOTE E. p. 84.

I am not to be supposed unaware, however incapable I may be of understanding him, that Cousin intends some higher and more recondite unity and substance—those which he regards as characterizing and being involved in 'the absolute,'—what I mean to show in the text is, that such notions are unknown to the general reason of mankind. Indeed such unity and substance must, considered by themselves, be utterly unknown to man, unless the finite were capable of comprehending the infinite, and in fact could never be considered as coming within the range of his conceptions, but on a system of pantheism which makes humanity to belong to the infinite and absolute itself, by identifying or confounding reason with God ; —a system which denying freedom to the Deity in the production of the works of creation, and yet asserting it on behalf of the human will, gives to the emanation what is wanting in the source, and thus destroys itself.

Here is our philosopher's exposition of his notions of substance and unity; but the reader who shall extract from it any tangible meaning, will be much more fortunate than the present writer :—

'Among the laws of thought given by psychology,

the two fundamental laws which contain all the others, the law of causality and the law of substance, irresistibly applied to themselves, elevate us immediately to their cause and their substance ; and as they are absolute, they elevate us to an absolute cause and an absolute substance. But an absolute cause and an absolute substance are identical in essence; since every absolute cause must be substance in so far as it is absolute, and every absolute substance must be cause in order to be able to manifest itself. Besides, an absolute substance must be one, in order to be absolute ; two absolutes are a contradiction ; and the absolute substance must be one or not at all. We may even say that all substance is absolute so far as it is substance, and consequently one ; for relative substances destroy the very idea of substance, and finite substances, which suppose beyond them another substance to which they belong, bear a strong resemblance to phenomena. The unity of substance, therefore, is involved in the very idea of substance, which is derived from the law of substance, an incontestible result of psychological observation ; so that experience applied to consciousness, at a certain degree of profoundness, gives that which appears at first view to be the most opposed to it, namely, ontology. In fact substantial causality is being in itself; the rational laws, therefore, are laws of being, and reason is the true existence,' &c.*

Writing of this sort is fortunately placed beyond the reach of refutation, by being far beyond the sphere of human comprehension. So far as any glimmering of meaning is perceptible, it seems to embody a sort

* Exposition of Eclecticism, pp. 64, 65.

of idealistic fatalism, all things being resolved into 'the absolute,' 'absolute laws of thought,' 'absolute principles,' 'absolute cause,' 'absolute substance,' 'absolute unity,' and reason, the *true* existence, as if the external world were illusory.

The space devoted in the text to animadversions on the philosophy of Cousin, will probably by many, not specially acquainted with recent philosophical speculations and their influence, be deemed quite disproportioned to the occasion. But those will be of a different opinion who are aware how deeply the highest literature of the age is imbued with the spirit of the German philosophy, of which Cousin is the apostle and expounder. We have already seen how entirely it pervades the system, (if it may be so called) of Coleridge. And through the poetry of Wordsworth, which if not the most popular of the age, has gained, and in many respects deservedly, the highest reputation of any, there runs a subtle pantheistic spirit, which needs not the less to be guarded against, that it presents itself to us in such forms of beauty. A portion of our periodical criticism is infected with something of the same spirit; and instances are not wanting, of its manifestation in works of physical science.

A philosophy which aims at accrediting all forms of faith, and all systems of opinion, which teaches that every system represents an order of phenomena and of ideas, which is perfectly real and true, though 'not the only one,' in consciousness,—which proposing to itself 'no other task, than that of comprehending things as they are, accepts, explains, and respects everything,'—such a philosophy is specially in harmony

* Exposition of Eclecticism. pp. 84, 85.

with the tendency and spirit of the age, as it manifests itself in very much of what prefers its claims so loudly to be considered the liberal press; which, where factious or political interests do not interfere, usually treats the worst forms of religion with the greatest favour. Better, both as more honest, and as presenting more distinct points of attack, was the open infidelity of last century, than the insidious and half-acknowledgement of the claims of Christianity in this, which seems to allow to it little more of truth than is conceived to be involved in the fact of its existence and prevalence, in common with every other form of faith, which has obtained in the world.

NOTE F. p. 91.

If the principles evolved in this chapter be correct, little reflection will be necessary to perceive, that they go directly to invalidate the pretensions of those who claim for the church infallibility, and lordship over the faith and consciences of men. The spirit of the whole section, may be expressed in a single apt and appropriate sentence of Pascal:—'The zeal of the pious to seek and practise excellence, would be useless if probability was exchanged for certainty.' The Romish Church claims infallibility, and the Oxford tractarians are promulging principles which can have little significance or force apart from a similar claim. Now infallibility in judgment or action, cannot be possessed without certainty of knowledge; to say that one might be infallible in regard to a matter about

which he possessed but uncertain knowledge, would be as absurd as to say, that a person though uncertain which of two or three roads to take, is yet sure to take the right one; any such unconscious infallibility would be nothing above instinct. The Church of Rome, and those who fraternize with her, by claiming infallibility for the Church's interpretation of Scripture, and allowing no other, as they preclude the exercise, and annul the right of individual or private judgment, preclude also moral election or choice; consequently so far as such Church authority takes effect, it extinguishes moral agency. The doctrines of our religion are revealed, and its facts narrated in a way which admits of, and even requires examination and inquiry,—in a way which on a vast variety of points gives scope for a choice between different views, and by consequence between such different modes of action, as these different views may prompt to,—a freedom essential to all moral agency. The Romish Church, or any other which annihilates this freedom, countervails the fundamental law of the moral universe.

The assumption of a more inflexible and sterner authority over our faith than God himself has claimed in his word, certainly calls for the most searching and severe scrutiny of their claim to exercise it, by whom it is assumed; and the most determined resistance, if that claim is found to be invalid. And it will need other warrant surely than a dubious and polluted episcopal succession to command the submission of thinking and independent men,—Britons too, who glory in a birthright of freedom. To justify such claims we are entitled to demand credentials as decisive as ever attested the divine legation of prophet or apostle. Till such are produced, we must be excused from

yielding; and to the calls of those, whoever they may be, who may demand our submission, we will feel entitled to respond—as the spirits did to the exorcist priests who pretended to act in the name of Jesus and of Paul, "Jesus and Paul we know, but who are ye?"

NOTE G. p. 123.

This is the view given of death in 'Combe's Constitution of Man,' a work that made a good deal of noise some years ago, and which embodies a considerable amount of one-sided and exaggerated truth, blended with some fundamental and pernicious errors. One of the fundamental and distinctive principles of the work is, 'the independent existence and operation of the natural laws of creation,' which the author divides into three classes—the physical, the organic, and the moral. The peculiarity of the new doctrine, he says, is that these operate *independently of each other*. A favourite illustration of the independent operation of the physical law, is the sinking of an unsound ship at sea:—'The most pious and benevolent missionaries,' says Mr. Combe, 'sailing to civilize and christianize the heathen, may if they embark in an unsound ship, be drowned by disobeying a physical law, without their destruction being averted by their morality.' Mr. Combe represents the infringement of the physical and organic laws as punished by physical and organic suffering, without such suffering being intended to have any moral influence; and in his observations on the moral advantages of punishment, he sneers at that view of the

sufferings of man in the present life, which regards a moral influence as their highest end. ‘ If,’ says he, evils and misfortunes are mere mercies of providence, it follows that a headache consequent on a debauch, is not intended to prevent repetition of drunkenness so much as to prepare the debauchee for the invisible world; and shipwreck in a crazy vessel is not designed to render the merchant more cautious, but to lead him to heaven.’ Now we regard these sufferings as intended and adapted to have both sorts of influence—the prudential and the moral too; and by the way we should be curious to know, what class of serious Christians would regard *that* as a preparation for ‘ the invisible world,’ which did not prevent ‘ a repetition of drunkenness!’

Now these principles kept in view, let us examine Mr. Combe’s notion of death:—In page 55,* there occurs the following statement: ‘ This then,’ the previous reasoning, ‘ leaves death in old age, as a natural and unavoidable institution of the Creator.’ On this principle decay and death will take place, though no physical or organic law has been infringed: of what then are they the punishment? Though a person should ever live and act in harmony with all the natural laws, death in old age is on this principle unavoidable:—in these circumstances then, is death no evil? This is what the author is evidently most anxious that he could show, and that too without regard being had at all, to a future state; and no wonder, for the credit of his theory depends upon it. ‘ It will not be denied,’ says he, ‘ that if old persons, when their powers of enjoyment are fairly exhausted, and their cup of

* Combe’s Constitution of Man.—People’s Edition.

pleasure is full, could be removed from this world, as we have supposed the lower animals to be, in an instant, and without pain or consciousness, to make way for a fresh and vigorous offspring, about to run the career which the old have terminated, there would be no lack of benevolence and justice in the arrangement.' 'In old persons the powers of enjoyment are fairly exhausted :' of what portion of these powers will this be true if they have never been abused ? Will it of any but a few of the lowest ? We have always been taught by what we have been accustomed to regard as sound philosophy, that the higher orders of these powers are enlarged and strengthened by proper exercise, and if such be the case, when shall their capacity for enjoyment be exhausted ? Not until the sources from which enjoyment may be derived shall fail ; and amid such a universe, when should this be ? Whatever might be said of the justice of the arrangement, by which creatures thus situated, and who had acted in harmony with all the laws of their nature, would have to suffer the inconceivable calamity of a dissolution of their being ; its benevolence would certainly be more than questionable, unless they were removed to something better, a provision which forms no element of the theory.

Mr. Combe is strenuous in asserting that if mankind would live in harmony with the physical and organic laws, they would be nearly if not altogether free from corporeal suffering. But do we live under a constitution of external nature which admits of this ? Are not the vicissitudes of the weather alone, not to speak of earthquakes and volcanoes, fatal to such a theory ? Notwithstanding the very advanced state of science and the arts, man can see but dimly into

futurity regarding what may intimately concern his safety, and is often exposed to dangers he could neither anticipate nor guard against. A storm may arise at sea, which may wreck the strongest vessel. One may catch the contagion of fever, where he could not be aware of there being any danger. A horse may stumble that never stumbled before, and fracture its rider's limb. Or one may have his neck broken by a slight trip of the foot on a stair. And though it were possible for mankind to obtain such a knowledge of all the agencies of nature, and such a control over its elements, as would place them in a condition of perfect security, how on these principles shall the moralist dispose of the long transition-ages of suffering and danger? If organic suffering has no relation to anything but the violations of organic law, how can its justice be vindicated in the case of those who would become aware of the existence of some such law, only by suffering the consequences of its infringement; as in Mr. Combe's own illustration of the effects of eating fox-glove or hemlock, how could persons in the infancy of science possibly know that certain quantities of these taken into the stomach would produce death, until experience had taught them by the actual occurrence? If it is one of the natural laws, ('which admit of no exceptions') that organic suffering occurs only in consequence of, and as punishment for, violation of organic law, how will Mr. Combe vindicate the benevolence of an arrangement involving such consequences?

Moreover, if, as is not denied, some pain would be experienced at death, even though no organic law were infringed during life, pain in that case could not be unitive as regards that law, no, nor yet preventive

either, for there could be no evil to prevent regarding the organic frame when it was just dissolving ;—if the cause of such suffering must not be sought in the operation of any other law, it will follow that God inflicts or allows suffering for no cause at all. If we are not prepared to admit this, then we must disallow the independent operation of the physical and organic laws, and acknowledge that physical and organic suffering have another relation and purpose than the punishment of the infringement of these laws.

NOTE H. p. 150.

In regard to some of the most important of the principles set forth in these pages, and in the interpretation of more than one of the Scripture texts there cited, I fortify myself by the authority of an eminent and very learned living divine, Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh.

'The apostle (1 Tim. ii. 1—6.) speaks of the "ONE GOD, as our Saviour." It may not be very easy to determine whether, when Paul used the word *our* here, he spake as a *Christian* or as a *man*. It is certain that God is, *in a peculiar sense*, the Saviour of those who through the faith of the Gospel, receive the blessings of the Christian salvation; but it is equally plain, that God stands in the relation of Saviour, as well as of Creator, and preserver, and benefactor, and governor to the human race. The living God is the Saviour of ALL men, specially of them that believe. The words plainly teach us that there is a

sense in which God is the Saviour of all men, while there is another and a higher sense in which he is the Saviour only of them who believe.

'He is the Saviour of all men, inasmuch as, moved by that infinite benignity which prevents him from having pleasure in the sufferings, even of the most guilty of his creatures; in the death of him who dieth, he has provided a Saviour and salvation, such as are *needed* by all men, such as are *suited* to all men; and inasmuch, too, as he has made a revelation of that salvation, addressed to all mankind, proclaiming himself "God in Christ, reconciling THE WORLD to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." There is nothing restrictive either in the nature of the salvation, or in the form of the revelation. Both respect the common character of mankind as rational, responsible, guilty, depraved, miserable, mortal, immortal beings. In the salvation there is every thing man needs, and the language of the revelation is, "To you, O MEN, I call, and my voice is to THE SONS OF MEN." He is thus the Saviour, not of a particular nation, but of men of "every kindred, and people, and tongue, and nation."

'This SAVIOUR-GOD would have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. From Scripture nothing is plainer, than that the salvation of man is wholly of God, and the destruction of man wholly of himself. If man perishes, he is the suicide of his own soul. For God has sworn by himself, that he has no pleasure in the death of him who dieth, but that he has pleasure in his turning from his evil ways, and living. "Turn ye, turn ye," says he, "why will ye die."

'And in order to their being saved, he willeth that

they come to the knowledge of the truth. From the constitution of the economy of nature, a constitution admirably illustrative of the wisdom, and righteousness, and benignity of God, and admirably suited to the intellectual and moral frame of man's nature, the only way in which individuals can become partakers of the salvation provided by God, is by thus understanding and believing *the truth*, that plain, well-accredited, and most indubitable statement of the way of salvation made in the Holy Scriptures. This statement God wills that all men should become acquainted with, and that all who become acquainted with it, should believe it. In regard to the first of these facts, what can be more satisfactory evidence than the words of our Lord, invested "with all power in heaven and on earth," the fully accredited revealer of the divine will, "Go ye into ALL THE WORLD, and preach the gospel *to every creature.*" It is the commandment of the everlasting God, that the mystery kept secret from former generations, but now made manifest, should by the Scriptures of the prophets be made known to *all* nations for the obedience of faith, and arrangements, in the appointment of the Gospel ministry, are made for carrying this commandment into effect.

'If mankind have not the knowledge of the truth, the cause is to be sought for anywhere, rather than in God's not willing that it should be so. It is to be found in men's neglecting to comply with, in men opposing the plainly revealed will of God. And it is equally plain that it is the will of God, that all to whom the truth comes, should know and believe, wherever the Gospel comes. "He commands all men every where to *repent*," i. e. to change their minds by believing the truth. If men continue ignorant and

unbelieving under a dispensation of the Gospel, this is not in accordance with, but in direct opposition to, the will of God. God, as the Saviour of men, appears in the Gospel, holding forth a salvation which all men need, and which he is ready to bestow on every sinner believing in Jesus.

* * * *

'This one Mediator of men, has given himself a ransom for all. * * This giving himself a ransom was not, as some would have it, the yielding the exact amount of duty and suffering, neither more nor less, due by those who are ultimately to be saved through his mediation, a doctrine nowhere explicitly taught in Scripture, replete with most perplexing difficulties, and utterly irreconcilable with many inspired declarations; but the doing and suffering as the substitute of sinners, what, in the estimation of infinite wisdom and righteousness, was necessary and sufficient to make the pardon of sin, and the salvation of sinners consistent with, illustrative of the perfections of the divine character, and the principles of the divine government.

'When it is said our Lord, as the Mediator of men, *gave himself a ransom for all,* we are not to understand that our Lord secured the salvation of *all* men, for it is plain that all men will not ultimately be saved, nor are we to understand that our Lord anticipated any result from his mediatorial exertions, which will not flow from them, for he sees and shall see of the travail of his soul, so as to be satisfied; but we *are* to understand that as, if Christ had not given himself a ransom, in the sense in which we have explained it, the perfections of the divine character, and the principles of the divine government, would have presented

insurmountable obstacles in the way of the salvation of *any sinner;* so, because Christ has given himself a ransom, these obstacles are completely removed, so that, if sinners perish, their perdition must be traced to some other cause than to the absolute impossibility which, without the mediation of Christ, must have existed of their being saved; and that every sinner, be he Jew or Gentile, however guilty, however depraved, believing in Jesus, is assured of salvation in a way infinitely glorious to the righteousness, as well as to the grace of Jehovah. Not only is the ransom paid by him, that is, his obedience to the death, of sufficient value, that if God pleased, it might avail for the pardon and salvation of all the sinning beings in the universe, but it is intended by God, is in its own nature fitted, and has in fact been found effectual, for removing all the obstacles arising out of the divine moral government, to the pardon and salvation of the lost race of men, so that "whosoever believeth in him shall assuredly not perish, but have everlasting life." ' *On the Design and Effects of Christ's Death.* In 'Opinions on Faith, Divine Influence,' &c. By John Brown, D.D.

NOTE I. p. 167.

In addition to, and elucidation of, the paragraph in the text, it should be borne in mind that in a moral agent 'knowledge is 'emphatically' power.' And such an agent is not to be regarded as free from guilt in not doing what is required of him, or in doing what he is

forbidden to do, because he was ignorant of such commands or prohibitions, when he might have known had he attended to them, or made inquiry respecting them. So in other respects; the capacity for yielding obedience, or the power of doing so, is increased by a healthful exercise and application of the powers of the mind, such as moral law calls for, in this way the physical capabilities of the living agent are enhanced, as well as a moral promptitude and decision generated. Man's moral Governor then justly looks for and demands from him, all along through his life, whatever he might be fit to yield by adequately and unceasingly improving all the elements and means of moral progress in his constitution and condition, and not merely what he might be able at any time to render though he had habitually neglected to improve these.

NOTE K. p. 183.

"Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" That the "clay" here is intended to represent the Jewish people, is evident from the reasoning in the context, viewed in connection with the passage in the prophecies of Jeremiah, from which the figure seems to be borrowed; and the Jewish people too, in that state of spiritual apostacy and moral vileness into which they had sunk themselves, and in which they had become utterly unfit to answer the intentions of heaven in their selection and separation from the other nations of the earth, a state

of such sinfulness and rebelliousness, in spite of special forbearance and favour, as made the having mercy on any an act of the highest and most sovereign grace. From such a lump, the making vessels unto dishonour was not in any inscrutable sovereignty, but on the highest and most obvious reasons :—" The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I speak concerning a nation to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. * * Now, therefore, go speak to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you: return ye every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good. And they said, There is no hope; but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil heart." It is obvious then from this passage, that the " vessels " assigned to dishonour are not only made from a lump, which like the " clay" of the potter is all vile, but also that they had been marred when under a previous process, fitted and

intended to make them vessels of honour. Compare the passage just cited, with Rom. ix. 22, and ii. 4, 5. The great principle which the apostle reasons out in Rom. ix, appears to be this, that the being of the stock of Abraham, would not in the least protect any person from being treated according to his own proper desert; but of the same lump, God would assign one vessel to honour and another to dishonour, according as they were found respectively fitted.

NOTE L. p. 184.

Much doctrinal confusion and even error, and much unwarrantable assumption have resulted from not rightly apprehending and keeping in view the distinction between the general love, or love of benevolence which God bears towards the whole race of men, with the grace bestowed on them in consequence; and that love of complacency and communion which he bears to his chosen. Nothing could be more full and distinct than the Scripture enunciations of both, yet how frequently has either the one or the other been overlooked or denied. The high Calvinist has disallowed any love of benevolence on the part of God towards all mankind, while the low Arminian or Universalist, while contending for this, has merged in it all the love of God towards any of our race, denying any discriminative regard for a peculiar and chosen people. Scripture passages in abundance, declaratory and expressive, of the benevolence of God towards the whole of mankind have been cited or referred to in the course

of the previous treatise: nor, though it came not within our plan to advert to it, is his special love to his chosen less distinctly or copiously expressed. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them," says Christ, "he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." It is said of God in respect to his chosen,— "He will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."

NOTE M. p. 185.

'It is apparently,' (evidently) says Howe, 'to be resolved into the wickedness of the world, that there is not a universal diffusion of the Gospel into every part. For it being evident to any one's reflection, that men are in a state of apostacy and defection from their Maker and common Lord: and therefore subject

to his displeasure. Whereas the merciful God hath done his own part, and so much beyond what was to be expected from him; issued out his proclamations of peace and pardon, upon so easy and indulgent terms, as are expressed in his Gospel; if hereupon, men also did their part, behaved themselves suitably to the exigency of their case, and as did become reasonable creatures, fallen under the displeasure of their Maker, (whereof their common condition affords so innumerable, so pregnant proofs) the gospel wheresoever it should arrive, would have been entertained with so great a transport of joy, and so ready and universal acceptance, as very soon to have made a great noise in the world; and being found to be of a universal tenour and concernment, and that what it says to one nation, it equally says the same to every one; it could not but be, that messengers would interchangeably have run from nation to nation; some to communicate, others to inquire after those strange tidings of great joy unto all people, lately sent from heaven; concerning the Emmanuel, God with us; God, again upon his return to man, and now in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. And thus how easily, and even naturally, would the gospel soon have spread itself through the world, especially the merciful God having so provided, that there should be an office constituted, and set up; a sort of men, whose whole business it should be, to propagate and publish those happy tidings. But that men should so indulge their sensual, terrene inclination, as not at all to use their understandings and considering power about other matters than only what are within the sight of their eye, when by so easy and quick a turn of thought they might feel and find out who made

them, and was the original of their life and being, and that things are not right, and as they should be, between him and them; and so by what is within the compass of natural revelation, be prepared for what is supernatural. And not that only, but to that stupidity by which they are unapt to inquire after and receive, to add that obstinate malignity by which they are apt to regret and oppose the merciful discoveries and overtures of their offended, reconcilable Creator and Lord. How manifestly doth this devolve the whole business of the little, slow progress of the gospel in the world, upon themselves only. As suppose we a prince of the greatest clemency, benignity, and goodness, from whom a whole country of his subjects had made a most causeless defection; hereupon to send to the whole body of the rebels, a gracious proclamation of free pardon upon their return to their allegiance and duty: and it only from hence comes to pass, that every individual person of them distinctly understands not what the message from their prince did import, because they that heard it would not, many of them, allow themselves to consider and regard it; and others of them with despiteful violence, fell upon the heralds, barbarously butchering some of them, and ignominiously repulsing the rest. Who would not say that prince had fully done his part, and acquitted himself answerably to the best character, though he should send to the rebels no further overtures. Much more, if through a long tract of time, he continues the same amicable endeavours for their reducement, notwithstanding the constant experience of the same ill success. Who would not cast the whole business of the continued ill understanding, between him and the revolters, upon themselves? and reckon it impossible

any should be ignorant of his kind and benign inclinations and intentions, if an implacable enmity, and disaffection to him and his government, were not their common temper.'—*Works* in 8 vols. London. F. Westley, 1822. Vol. II, p. 258, 259.

Since the last sheets of the present work were put to press, I perceive in perusing Sir James Mackintosh's Preliminary Dissertation to the Encyclopædia Britannica, which I had not before met with, that he advocates the dogma, that erroneous opinion is blameless; or, in other words, that man is not responsible for his opinions and belief: this the writer deems a subject of regret in a work of such distinguished merit,—a work embodying so much original and successful disquisition on moral subjects. From this opinion has obviously proceeded, what is perhaps the only fault in the execution of the work,—the absence of any adequate or merited censure of the pernicious scepticism of such writers as Mr. Hume. The indestructible convictions of mankind, however, as embodied in the very structure of language, revolt against such a conclusion; and Sir James while stating and defending this opinion, accordingly uses language which appears to be utterly incompatible with it, and to embody the elements of its complete refutation :—

'The Scotists,' says Sir James, 'steadily affirmed the blamelessness of erroneous opinion; a principle which is the only effectual security for conscientious inquiry, for mutual kindness, and for public quiet.' *

* Preliminary Dissertation to the Ency. Brit. p. 312.

Much ignorance and error subsist in consequence of men neglecting to inquire: if inquiry is a matter of conscience, or what we are morally bound to, neglecting to inquire must be a violation of moral obligation, or a sin; and how can those states of the understanding (ignorance or erroneous opinion) be blameless which subsist solely in consequence of neglecting what we are morally bound to perform? Is it meant that the *manner* in which we pursue inquiry is a matter of conscience—that we are morally bound to pursue it fairly;—then there is much inquiry not so conducted; men examine, but they often do not examine impartially,—they do not inquire after, and weigh duly, all the reasons for and against an opinion,—they look on this side,—they search on this side more than on that, according as they wish the result to be: are 'those states of the understanding' altogether blameless which are thus produced? Again:—'We morally approve industry, desire of knowledge, and love of truth, and all the habits by which the understanding is strengthened and rectified, because their formation is subject to the will. But we do not feel a moral anger against ignorance or folly, because they are involuntary.* If 'we morally approve' desire of knowledge and love of truth, must we not morally disapprove or condemn their opposites, and what are these but prejudice and uninquiring indolence, and by these ignorance and folly subsist. The opinions men form on moral subjects enter into their principles of action; if erroneous opinion here be blameless, how can the conduct be blameable which is in accordance with it. Hume held and published to the world the opinion that 'female infidelity

* Preliminary Dissertation to the Ency. Brit. p. 312.

when known is a small thing, and when unknown, nothing.' If the holding of this opinion was blameless, how could there be blameableness in acting on it? Yet, Sir James, though he treats Mr. Hume with a very unmerited leniency in regard to this detestable insinuation, regards the conduct it would lead to as amongst the most debasing and disastrous both to human nature and to society. Sir James continues: 'No one but a religious persecutor, a mischievous and overgrown child, wreaks his vengeance on involuntary, inevitable, compulsory acts or states of the understanding, which are no more affected by blame than the stone which the foolish child beats for hurting him.' I know of no acts or states of the understanding which are 'inevitable,' or in any intelligible sense, 'compulsory,' except it be those induced by strict demonstration, and such as result from the immediate perceptions of the senses; and these are the farthest from having relation to religion that any states of the understanding can be, and are not likely to expose any to religious persecution. And why should the principle, that erroneous opinion is blameless, be the only safeguard against religious persecution, and 'the only security for public quiet'? To regard 'acts and states of the understanding' as morally blameable, is one thing, to regard them as coming within the range of civil authority,—or as ranking among things which should be forcibly suppressed, is quite another, unless civil authority be regarded as co-extensive with moral obligation, and even religious duty,—a principle now wisely abjured in all free communities, and one we are sure Sir James Mackintosh would have been the last to have knowingly sanctioned. And why, finally, should the principle that erroneous opinion is blame-

less, be regarded as 'the only security for mutual kindness.' If we are not prepared to treat each other with kindness notwithstanding the perception of blameworthiness, we are yet strangers to the highest order of philanthropy. In the eyes of God we are all deeply blameable; yet with what kindness and compassion are we treated by him: yea, it was our very guilt which was the occasion of the highest manifestation of his love towards us. Jesus Christ when he sojourned on earth was kind even 'to the evil and unthankful,' and manifested the tenderest concern for those who had formed the falsest and most injurious opinions respecting him, and he has left us "an example that we should follow his steps."

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